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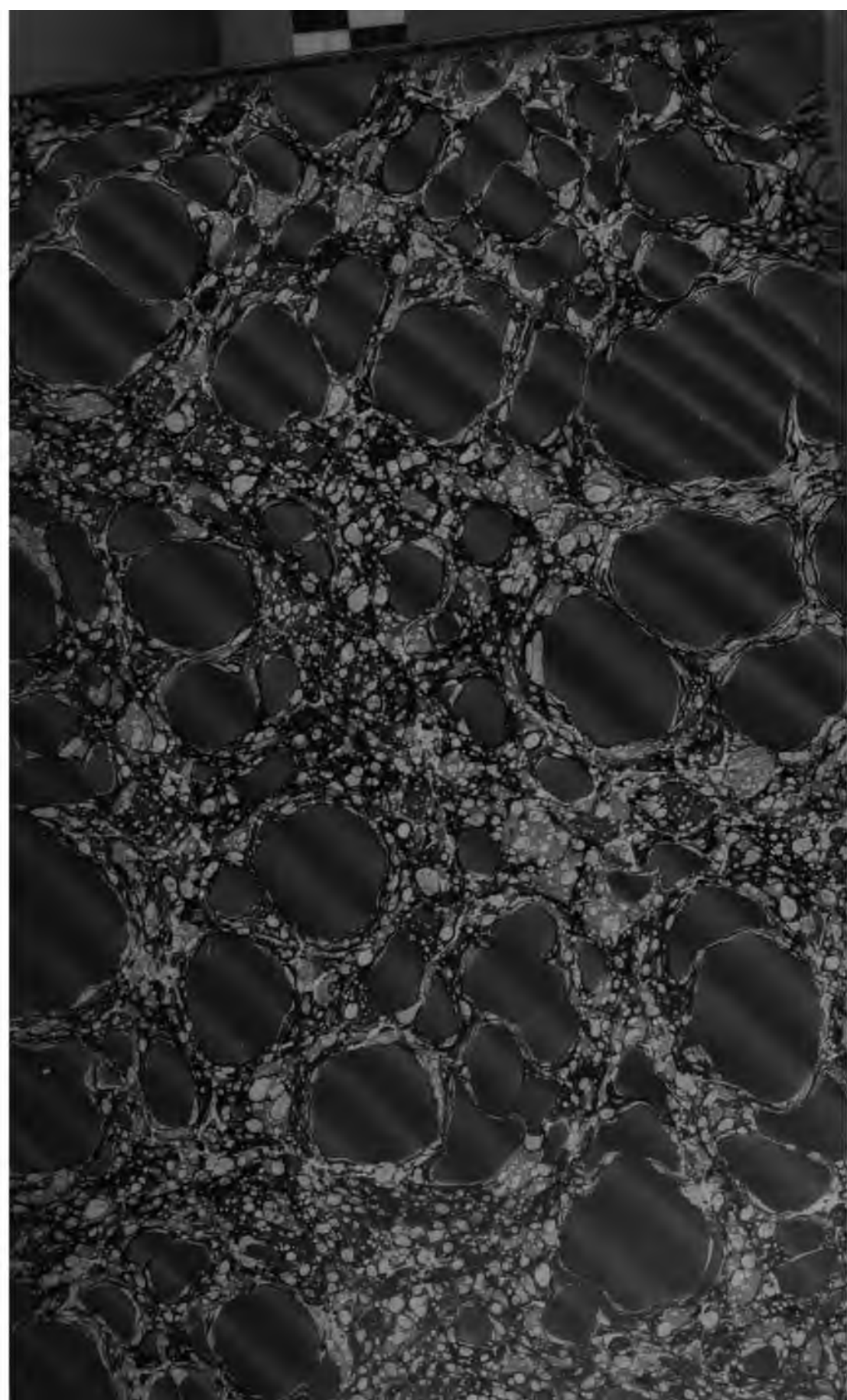


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*DANTE ALIGHIERI*



THE VINTAGE BOOK COMPANY, INC., NEW YORK

MADE FROM A CAST TAKEN AFTER DEATH

AT BOLOGNA, 1861

From a collection in the possession of the University of Bologna

H. W. Fowler, 1907

MAN Bodley, 17, 18, 19

REPROD. BY A. B. B.

THE POEMS  
OF THE  
VITA NUOVA AND CONVITO  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI.


TRANSLATED BY  
CHARLES LYELL, A.M.,  
*Formerly Fellow of Saint Peter's College, Cambridge.*

ITALIAN AND ENGLISH.

LONDON:  
C. F. MOLINI, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.

M.DCCC.XLII.


12 05 16



“ Scilicet incipiam limâ mordacius uti,  
Et sub iudicium singula verba vocem.”

OVID.

PRINTED BY R. AND J. E. TAYLOR,  
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.



TO  
THE REV. HENRY FRANCIS CARY, A.M.,  
THE UNRIVALLED TRANSLATOR OF  
THE VISION OF DANTE,  
THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION  
OF SOME OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED OF THE  
LYRICAL POEMS OF DANTE  
IS DEDICATED,  
WITH RESPECT AND ESTEEM,  
BY  
CHARLES LYELL.

Kinnordy, September 10, 1842.



## P R E F A C E.

---

THE poems of the *VITA NUOVA* and *CONVITO* have already appeared in an English dress in the *CANZONIERE OF DANTE* published in 1835. They are here presented in a corrected version, having been carefully revised, with a view to give the literal sense with more scrupulous fidelity.

The first idea of making a verbal translation occurred to the writer when studying the remarkable works of Professor Rossetti, who considers the *VITA NUOVA* as an enigma, the *CONVITO* as its solution, and the two together as affording the master-key for unlocking the mysteries of the *COMMEDIA*. He further says that the poetical language of Dante generally is constructed in a double sense, a literal and an allegorical, conveying an obvious and a secret, an exoteric and an esoteric sense, after the model of the writings of the ancient philosophers. For arriving,

therefore, at the internal and hidden sense, the first step undoubtedly is to understand the plain external sense of the words and sentiments which cover and conceal it. “ *Perocchè in ciascuna cosa che ha 'l dentro e 'l fuori, è impossibile venire al dentro se prima non si viene al di fuori\**.”

This the Translator has endeavoured to accomplish, and to communicate the literal meaning of the poems faithfully in blank verse. At the same time, he has considerable doubts whether his purpose would not have been more completely attained if he had followed the recommendation and example of M. Villemain, and given the preference to prose. M. Villemain says, “ On ne saurait assez admirer la fécondité du Dante : mais comment faire sentir la grâce de cette expression, tantôt familière, terrestre, et tantôt idéale ? Le talent a pu l'essayer dans des vers français ; mais toute traduction en vers est une autre création que l'original. Pour en donner quelque idée, il vaut mieux en calquer les formes dans une prose naturelle. Il en est de la prose, pour traduire exactement un poëte, comme de ces figures de cire qui n'ont

\* Convito, Tratt. 2. c. 1.

aucun mérite d'art, et qui peuvent avoir un grand mérite de fidélité, et, par une imitation matérielle et complète, reproduire toutes les formes et les teintes même de la physionomie. J'essaye ainsi de traduire quelques passages du Dante, sans rien ajouter à son style, je tache de rendre les expressions de sa langue forte et jeune, emportée vers les plus grandes hardiesses par la sublimité des choses qu'elle exprime, souvent simple, populaire, mais sans calcul, non pour faire une contraste, mais pour être entendu de tout le monde\*."

These remarks of M. Villemain are as just as they are elegantly expressed, and his translations are as faithful and excellent as might be expected. There are English examples too, in Foscolo's essays on Petrarch, of successful prose translations of old Italian lyrical poems. Yet blank verse has been preferred and adopted, as it gives elevation to the diction, presents a resemblance, in form at least, to the original, is a pleasanter exercise of the mind than prose, and opposes no insurmountable obstacle, like rhyme, to perfect fidelity. It is not pretended that this merit

\* Cours de Littérature, vol. i. p. 420. Paris, 1840.



will everywhere be found, but a nearer approach to it has been made than in the version of 1835, and principally through the kindness of Mr. Cary, whose valuable strictures have been attended to and are here acknowledged with pride as well as gratitude. The learned disquisitions of P. J. Fraticelli, in the "Opere Minori di Dante," Firenze, 1834, (a work that every Italian student should possess), have always been consulted; as also the German translation of K. L. Kannegiesser, "Dante Alighieri's Lyrische Gedichte," (Leipzig, 1827,) in rhyme, and corresponding, line by line, with the metre of the original, to which are added notes by the celebrated Italian critic Professor Karl Witte of Breslau.

The Translator has only further to observe, that there are few, except the admirers of the obscure poetry of the Middle Ages, who can be interested in his work, and that he cannot better express the limited extent of his hope of success in this endeavour to make the greatest of Italian poets intelligible, than in the concluding words of the preface of Signor Gaetano Polidori to his elegant translation, in *versi sciolti*, of the "Opere Poetiche di Milton." (Londra, 1841.)

“ Si vedrà, spero, che nella mia versione, non solo non vi sono idee ed immagini aggiunte, ma neppure (se non forse per fortuito ed involontario accidente), epiteti che non sieno nell'originale ; e che, quantunque abbia io avuto cura di scrivere con proprietà di lingua, con chiarezza, con franca ancorchè sobria verseggiatura, pure, colla mia traduzione si potrà seguir passo a passo l'originale, ed in essa ravvisarlo. Se vi son degli sbagli, saranno nell'interpretazione d'alcuni pochi passi astrusi : pure, se ho errato, spero almeno di non aver fatto parlare l'altissimo poeta in maniera indegna di lui.”

- Ognuno è all'ultimo poeta."

*Inferno. 4.*

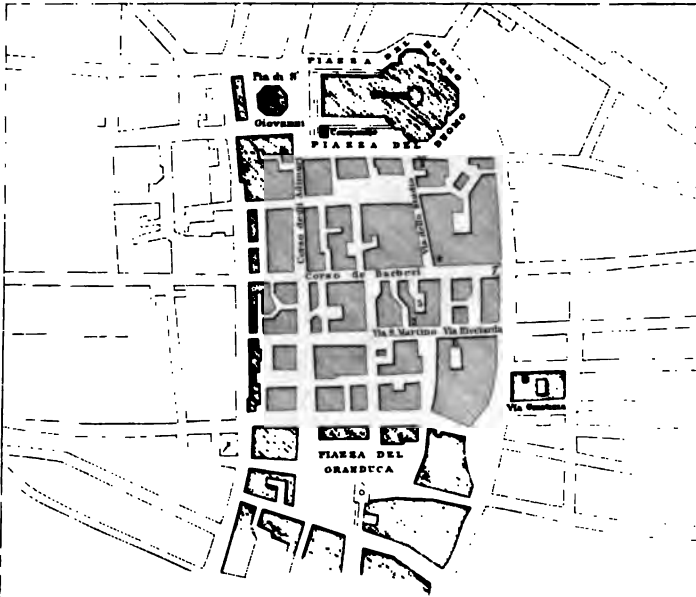
- E se il mondo sapesse il cor ch'egli ebbe.  
Memorando sua vita a frusto a frusto,  
Assai lo biasimerebbe e più lo loderebbe."

*Paradiso. 2.*

- Ma tratterò nel suo stato gentile.  
Donne e donzelle ammorose con voi.  
Che non è cosa da parlarne altrui."

*Vita Nuova.*





# LOCALITIES IN FLORENCE CONNECTED WITH THE LIFE OF DANTE

The house of Dante N°3 is now 1042  
l'ass dei Signori Mannelli Galilei  
Via Riccarda N° 657.

1. Il Battistero. Chiesa del San Giovanni. Dante.
2. Sasso di Dante. See Woolverton's Sonnet.
3. Casa degli Alighieri. House of Dante 1311.
4. Casa del Podestà. House of Raimondo etc.
5. Casa dei Donati. House of Raimondo, wife of Dante, etc.
6. Casa dei Priori 1377. Dante was one of the six Priors.
7. Chiesa San Pietro. 1363. See 17. Villani, cap. 133. Anno 1374.
8. Capella del Redento in which is the portrait of Dante by Giotto.



Two ancient Roman doorways in the house of Dante as they existed in 1890. Drawn and communicated by Seymour Krup. Esq.

## DANTE ALIGHIERI.

BORN 1265.—DIED 1321.

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THE following notice is extracted from the chronicle of Giovanni Villani\* (born 1280? died 1348), an historian celebrated for simplicity and candour, the contemporary and fellow-citizen of Dante, and belonging to an opposite political faction.

“In the month of July of this year, 1321, died Dante, at the city of Ravenna in Romagna, soon after his return from an embassy to Venice, undertaken in the service of the Lords of Polenta with whom he resided; and he was buried in front of the entrance of the cathedral of Ravenna, with the honours becoming a great poet and philosopher. He died in exile at about 56 years of age.

“This Dante was of an honourable and ancient family, citizens of Florence, of the quarter ‘Porta San Piero;’ and the cause of his banishment was this; that when Charles of Valois of the house of France came to Florence in 1301, and expelled the faction of the Bianchi, Dante was one of the principal governors of our city and belonged to that party, although he was a Guelph; therefore, without having any other fault, he was expelled with the rest of his party, and

\* Delle Historie de’ suoi tempi, di Giovanni Villani, Cittadino Fiorentino, libro ix. cap. 135 : *Del Poeta Dante e come morì.*

banished from Florence. After which he went and studied at Bologna, Paris, and many other places in Europe.

“Although a layman, he was profoundly learned in almost every science, and was distinguished as the greatest poet and philosopher of his time. As a rhetorician he was perfect, both in prose and verse; an eloquent public speaker; and the noblest writer in the loftiest and most beautiful style of poetry that has ever appeared in our language, either before his time or since.

“In his youth he composed the book entitled *La Vita Nuova d'Amore*; and afterwards, when in exile, about twenty *Canzoni*, moral and amatory, of great excellence; and among other things, wrote three noble epistles, one of which he addressed to the government of Florence, lamenting his banishment and complaining of its injustice; another to the emperor Henry the Seventh, who was besieging Brescia, reproving him, almost prophetically, for the error he was committing in remaining there; the third he addressed to the Italian cardinals, when the papal chair had become vacant by the death of Clement the Fifth, urging them to unite in electing an Italian for his successor. These epistles are written in Latin, the diction elevated, the sentiments just, and the reasoning powerful, and they were much commended by the wise and learned.

“He composed also *La Commedia*, in which he united polished verse to important and subtile disquisitions, moral, natural, astronomical, philosophical and theological; adorning them with new and beautiful poetical figures and comparisons, and treating most profoundly, in a hundred chapters or cantos, of the nature and condition of Hell, Purgatory, and

Paradise : as he who will study the poem, and has a deep and penetrating understanding, will see and acknowledge. True it is, that in that *Commedia* he has indulged himself sometimes in railing and censuring, after the manner of poets, more than was becoming ; but this perhaps was provoked by the embittered feelings of an exile.

“ Another work of his, in Latin, entitled *De Monarchia*, treats of the office of pope and that of emperor.

“ He began also a comment in Italian upon fourteen of the above-mentioned moral *Canzoni*, which was left imperfect by his untimely death ; except as regards three of them ; and by that specimen, which is adorned with beautiful language and philosophical argument, we see that, if completed, it would have been a profound, elegant, and very extensive work.

“ He also composed a small book, which he entitles *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, in which four parts are promised, but two only have been found ; his sudden death perhaps prevented there being more. It is characterized by forcible and elegant latinity, and good reasoning, and points out the imperfections of the different dialects prevailing in Italy.

“ This Dante, being sensible of his great talents and acquirements, was somewhat haughty, reserved, and disdainful ; and, with an ungraciousness common to philosophers, he could scarcely brook the society of the unlearned : but on account of his many virtues, his science, and worth, it appears to me a duty to give a perpetual memorial of such a citizen in this our chronicle ; more especially as the noble works he has left us in writing bear true testimony to his merit, and extend the honourable fame of our city.”



## RITRATTO DI DANTE.

Fu' l nostro Dante di mezza statura ;  
Vestì onesto, secondo suo stato ;  
Mostrossi un po' per l'età richinato ;  
Fè mansueta e grave l'andatura ;  
La faccia lunga un po' più che misura ;  
Aquilin naso ; e' l pel nero e ricciato ;  
E' l mento lungo e grosso ; e l labro alzato,  
E grosso un po' sotto la dentatura ;  
Aspetto maninconico e pensoso ;  
Cigli umidi ; cortese ; e vigilante  
Fu negli negli studj ; sempre grazioso ;  
Vago in parlar ; la voce risonante ;  
Dilettossi nel canto e in suon maestoso ;  
Fu in gioventù di Beatrice amante ;  
Ed ebbe virtù tante,  
Che il corpo a morte meritò corona  
Poetica, e andò l'alma a vita bona.

Nacque 1265. Morì 1321.

*Note.*—The above description corresponds correctly with that given by Boccaccio in his *Vita di Dante*. It was copied at Paris in 1834, from an autograph of the Commentator G. Biagioli, written on the fly-leaf of a "*Comedia di Danthe, Venetia 1829.*" Biagioli had added, "*Portrait du Dante tel qu'il se trouve à la fin d'un grand nombre de manuscrits du xiv et xv siècle.*"

Professor Karl Witte, in "*Dante Alighieri's Lyrische Gedichte, Leipzig 1842, Zweiter Theil, p. xxx,*" alludes to it thus : "*Das Dante schildernde Sonett aus Cod. Laurent., Plut. xl. No. 26.*"

A conjectural alteration has been hazarded in the thirteenth line, to complete the rhymes. It stands thus in the original :—

"*Dilettossi nel canto e in ogni sono.*"





## NOTE ON THE FRONTISPIECE.

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THE engraving placed at the head of this volume is a portrait of Dante better authenticated we believe than any other that is known. The drawing was made from a mask presented to me by Professor Rossetti, who received it from Florence as a cast from the bust of Dante in the Palazzo del Nero, which has descended by inheritance to the Marchese Torrigiani. There is a family tradition that the bust was formed from a cast taken after death from the head of Dante at Ravenna, 1321. It has been examined by eminent sculptors and painters, both Italian and English, who see so many traits of the expression natural to the features immediately after death, as to afford convincing proof of the probable truth of the above tradition. The bust is fixed in a square wooden frame, and suspended against the wall of a lower room in the palace. By favour of the Marchese Torrigiani an artist was permitted to make three drawings of the bust, a full face, profile, and three-quarters; and the Marquis has added considerably to their value by presenting me with the following document:—

“L’effigie propria di Dante Alighieri, cavata dalla maschera che li fu formata sul volto dopo la sua morte, seguita in Ravenna l’anno 1321. Carbone Maria del Nero, Barone

di Porcigliano, per conservare la memoria di così raro ed unico tesoro, antico retaggio di sua nobilissima famiglia, fece collocare in questa medaglia, ed ornare, l'anno 1735.

“Certifico, io sottoscritto, essere in mio possesso come parte dell'eredità di Ottavia Guadagni, mia sorella, e moglie del Barone Carbone del Nero, discendente diretto del sopra citato Barone dello stesso nome, la medaglia in cui è situato, dentro cornice, il suddetto ritratto, di grandezza naturale, in alto rilievo, in gesso colorato. Dal qual ritratto sono stati ricavati le tre copie fatte sotto i miei occhi, per conto del Sigr. Lyell, dal disegnatore Vito d'Ancona. E certifico parimente che sul di dietro del quadro che racchiude la medaglia è situata un cartello, colla sopracitata iscrizione stampata: e che intorno alla medaglia circolare sta scritto, in caratteri stampatelli, quanto appresso:—

*“Effigie di Dante Alighieri, dalla maschera formata sul di lui cadavere, in Ravenna, l'anno 1321.*

“Firenze. Palazzo Torrigiani, già del Nero,  
“sui Renai.

“Il dì 8 Luglio 1840.”

*Antonio Torrigiani*







*Portrait of Dante Alighieri. Aged 25 Painted by  
Giotto about 1290 in the Chapel of the Podestà at  
Florence Discovered 21.<sup>st</sup> July 1870 Copied before the  
restorations in 1871.*

*Engraved by Miss C. C. C.*



*By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.*

A friend at Florence has communicated the following interesting supplement to the history of the Torrigiani bust of Dante.

Florence, February 27, 1842.

"HAVING met with a curious and unknown anecdote of a bust of Dante, I send you the following extract, which will interest you, as it probably relates to the one of which you have a cast. It is from an inedited and autograph MS. in the Magliabecchian Library, No. IX., by Giovanni Cinelli, a celebrated antiquarian and physician, who published '*Le Bellezze di Firenze*,' in 1677. The title of this MS. in four volumes is '*La Toscana letterata, ovvero Istoria degli Scrittori Fiorentini*.'

"At page 325 begins the life of Dante.

"At page 340 he proceeds thus:—'Fu con orrevolezza da cittadini di Ravenna, che cortesemente accolto l'avean, giusta suo merito, in morte con essequie e sepolcro onorato, al quale aggiunsero un bell'epitaffio di Giovanni del Virgilio, che nello stesso scolpito si legge\*. La sua testa fu poi dal sepolcro dal Arcivescovo di Ravenna fatta cavare e donata a Giambologna, scultor famosissimo, dalle cui mani, siccome tutte l'altre cose curiose di modelletti ed altre materie, in Pietro Tacca, suo scolare ed erede, passarono†. Onde mo-

\* The well-known epitaph, "Theologus Dantes nullius dogmatis expers."

† "Al suo sepolcro in Ravenna vi era una testa assai ben modellata, la quale dal Arcivescovo di detta città fu donata al celebre scultore Giambologna."—*Pelli, Memorie*, p. 151.



strando egli un giorno alla Duchessa Sforza, fra l'altre galanterie e singolarità, la testa di Dante, ella con imperioso tratto togliendola seco portar la volse, privando in un tempo medesimo il Tacca e la città di gioia sì cara, il che con sommo dolor di esso Pietro seguì, per quanto Lodovico Salvetti suo scolare, e testimonio di questo fatto di vista, m'ha più volte raccontato. Era questa testa per la parte anteriore di faccia, non molto grande, ma con grandissima delicatezza d'ossi costrutta, e dalla fronte alla parte posteriore, occipite dimandato, ove la Sutura Lambdoidea ha suo termine, era molto lunga, a segno che non rotonda come l'altre, ma ovata era sua forma, riprova manifesta della memoria profonda di questo insigne Poeta, e per la di lei bellezze era bene spesso, come Sceda, da' giovani del Tacca disegnata. La Duchessa però, postala in una ciarpa di drappo verde, di propria mano la portò via, e Dio sa in quali mani e dove in oggi cosa si pregiata e degna si trovi.'

"This Cinelli was the editor of the first edition of Leonardo Aretino's *Life of Dante*, printed in 1671. Pelli mentions him at p. 6 in a note, where this MS. is alluded to.

"The Marchese Torrigiani's bust of Dante is ascertained to be plaster coloured, and not terra-cotta as was supposed. The process of colouring may be the cause of the obliteration of the finer markings of the face observable in the mask from which your lithograph is taken, and of the smoother, fleshier, and more feminine appearance in the three drawings of Vito d'Ancona which were made for you. The mask which you have is from the mould in my possession, which I procured from the Cavalier Bartolini, the chief sculptor here, as a cast

from the Torrigiani terra-cotta. There is a third cast which belonged to Ricci the sculptor, who made the Dante monument in Santa Croce. Ricci's heirs lent it to Fabris, who made use of it for the obverse of his medal of Dante. There are material, though slight, differences in all the three, and perhaps they are from different moulds; yet they all have the same peculiarities, which belong to nature and are not artistic. For instance, the eyes are neither closed nor open; the left eye is rather more closed than the right one. They are all three the same size, of life, with the same cap, the same lock of hair, all the same very natural wrinkles and veins, where not effaced, and they are all three fine heads, and much beyond any sculptor of those early times, and I think of any time, for they seem nature, only modified by accident, such as warping, shrinking, scraping, &c., perhaps retouching in some parts. May not Giovanni Bologna's be the original of all, cast on the real face, and removed from the monument at Ravenna when Cardinal Bembo put up the marble one? In the beautiful fresco portrait of Dante, by Giotto, on the wall of the Capella del Podestà here [Florence], a treasure which has been recently recovered, we see the same features precisely as in the Torrigiani bust, but with the softer, happier expression of the age of about twenty-five.

"S. K."

“ Siate, cristiani, a muovervi più gravi ;  
Non siate come penna ad ogni vento,  
E non crediate ch' ogni acqua vi lavi.  
Avete il vecchio e il novo testamento,  
E il Pastor della chiesa che vi guida ;  
Questo vi basti a vostro salvamento,  
Se mala cupidigia altro vi grida,  
Uomini siate, e non pecore matte,  
Sì che il Giudeo tra voi di voi non rida ;  
Non fate come agnel che lascia il latte  
Della sua madre, e semplice e lascivo  
Seco medesimo a sua piacer combatte.  
Così Beatrice a me, com' io lo scrivo.”

*Paradiso, v.*

ON  
THE VITA NUOVA  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI.

---

THE title of the book admits of two interpretations, a literal and an allegorical. It may imply a history of *The Early Life* of Dante, or a history of *The New Life* following an allegorical death.

In the mixture of prose and verse the work resembles that of Dante's favourite author, Boetius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*; differing in this, that the prose of Boetius is an exposition of his verse, while the verse of Dante is merely a poetical version of some of the most remarkable passages of his prose.

This singular narrative would appear, from seeming data scattered through it, to be written by Dante at the age of twenty-six. He describes his becoming enamoured of Beatrice when he had just completed his ninth year, and when she had just entered upon hers; he expatiates upon her beauty; relates the strength and constancy of his attachment amidst difficulties and unexplained motives of conceal-

ment; he mentions the loss of the lady's favour, by her suspicion of his attachment to another, her denying him her usual salute, and his consequent unhappiness; he relates her death at the age of twenty-five, and the desolate state to which he was reduced. He then speaks of another lady, bearing a resemblance to the deceased, whose looks of pity made an impression on his heart; he acknowledges this in two sonnets addressed to her, then repents this infidelity to his first love, and reproaches himself bitterly; after this, Beatrice presents herself to him in a vision, adorned as when he first beheld her, and from that moment his ancient love is restored and given to her exclusively.

The last poem of the *Vita Nuova* recites his being transported in thought to the Empyreum, where he beholds his Beatrice in glory that is ineffable and incomprehensible. After having composed this sonnet he says there appeared to him a wondrous vision, in which he beheld things that determined him to say no more of this blessed lady till he should be able to treat of her more worthily, for which end he was studying to the utmost of his power; so that if it should be the pleasure of Him for whom all things live, that his life should be prolonged some years, he hoped to say of that lady what never had been said of any one.

Such is the simple outline of the *Vita Nuova*; but it is so intermingled with metaphysical abstractions, Platonic mysticisms, and Pythagorean fancies as to the number nine; some things are so strangely introduced, others so strangely omitted, that doubts arise, and we ask ourselves whether Beatrice and this love-passion of Dante be a reality or a fiction. The question was started long ago, and is debated at the present

time by Professor Rossetti of King's College, London, and P. J. Fraticelli, the editor of the recent Florence edition of the works of Dante; the latter maintaining that the *Vita Nuova* is an ingenuous love story; the former that it is an enigma, every circumstance of which is a mere creation of the fancy.

Boccaccio, the first biographer of Dante, in his *Vita di Dante*, written in 1351, relates as follows: "Folco Portinari, a distinguished citizen of Florence, gave an entertainment as was customary on the 1st of May, to which the youthful Dante, who had not completed his ninth year, was taken by his parents. Among the large assemblage of young people was Beatrice Portinari, the daughter of Folco, who was about eight years of age. She was graceful, gentle, and exceedingly pleasing; in manners and conversation modest and grave beyond her years: added to this, the features of her face were delicate and admirably formed, and besides her beauty, there was such peculiar loveliness in her appearance, that by many she was reputed a little angel. At this festival, though not seen for the first time, she first had power to enamour the eyes of Dante, and young as he was, her image was received with such affection in his heart, that as long as he lived it never departed from him. The sorrows which Dante suffered from this passion at a more advanced age he has himself shown in part in his *Vita Nuova*. His love was virtuous and pure, and he was doomed to feel the heaviest weight of affliction in the loss of his beloved, who died at the end of her twenty-fourth year, and the grief of Dante was such that his friends believed death alone could terminate it. While his tears were still falling for the loss of Beatrice he

composed a little volume, which he entitled *Vita Nuova*; a compilation of sonnets and canzoni of wonderful beauty, written at various times, and accompanied with an account of the occasion which called forth each of them."

This narrative, which we have greatly abridged, should be decisive, we think, of the question both of the reality of the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*, and of the attachment of Dante. The story of Boccaccio seems confirmed by the first canzone of the *Convito*, which paints the struggle for superiority between an earthly and a spiritual affection. In the *Purgatorio* too, where Beatrice first appears to Dante as a spirit of heaven, the allusions to her former corporeal state seem unequivocal. We cannot, therefore, entirely adopt the views of Professor Rossetti and his predecessors\*; but are disposed to attribute whatever is strange and mysterious in the poems of the *Vita Nuova*, and in the prose which strings those pearls together, to the taste for allegory and obscurity prevalent in that age, and still more, to the multitude of ideas then crowding on the poet's mind, which had soared into the Heaven of Heavens,

"Oltre la spera che più larga gira,"

and was filled with the conception of the Divine Vision, over which he had destined his angelic Beatrice to preside, and to shed her beauty as the symbol of Christian philosophy.

\* G. M. Filelfo, *Vita di Dante*, 1450? who pronounces the Beatrice of Dante to be a creation as purely ideal as the Pandora of Grecian mythology.

A. M. Biscioni, *Prose di Dante*, &c., Firenze, 1723, who treats the account of Boccaccio as a fable, and Beatrice as a mere personification of Theology.

ON THE  
CONVITO  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI.

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THE title, *Il Convito*, The Banquet, was probably suggested by the Banquets of Plato and Xenophon, the purpose of Dante being, like theirs, to furnish an intellectual feast at once instructive and agreeable; but his manner of executing this is entirely different, the work being a comment upon three of his canzoni. He professes an intention of commenting upon fourteen, "*quattordici canzoni sì di Amore come di virtù materiate\**," which his biographers generally suppose he was prevented from performing only by death†.

\* *Convito*, *Trat.* 1. c. 1.

† No fragments of the eleven comments that are wanting have been found; but in the three of the *Convito* there are allusions to eleven canzoni, which Professor Witte considers to be those that had been fixed upon, and has arranged them in the 'Lyrische Gedichte von K. L. Kannegiesser' in the order that he presumes was intended. They are respectively Nos. iv., vii., ix., xxv., xvi., xviii., viii., ii., iii., vi., v. of the 'Canzoniere of Dante,' London, 1835.



Professor Rossetti maintains that the *Convito* is the philosophical key of the *Vita Nuova*, which is itself the hieroglyphical key of the *Commedia*; and further, that these three canzoni, taken in an inverted order, represent the three canticles of Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso\*. Certain it is, that Dante, in commenting on the canzoni, treats of all those great topics which distinguish the *Commedia* as an historical, religious, and philosophical poem, and have established his fame as a sound moralist, a profound theologian, an indignant, severe, unsparing satirist, a true patriot, and a bold political and religious reformer†.

Like the *Commedia*, the *Convito* is truly a cyclopædia of the natural, moral and political philosophy of the thirteenth century, and might seem intended for a mere display of the

\* Lo Spirito Antipapale di Dante, pp. 131-339.

† There is a short eulogium on Dante's peculiar excellence as a theological poet by Ozanam, in his recent learned work, 'Dante et La Philosophie Catholique au treizième siècle,' par A. F. Ozanam, Paris, 1839, which is so just and original, that we have pleasure in transcribing it: "On a dit qu'Homère était le théologien de l'antiquité païenne, et l'on a représenté Dante à son tour comme l'Homère des temps chrétiens. Cette comparaison qui honore son génie fait tort à sa religion. L'aveugle de Smyrne fut justement accusé d'avoir fait descendre les dieux trop près de l'homme, et nul au contraire mieux que le Florentin ne sut relever l'homme, et le faire monter vers la Divinité. C'est par là, c'est par la pureté, l'immatérialité de son symbolisme, comme par la largeur infinie de sa conception, qu'il a laissé bien loin au dessous de lui les poètes anciens et récents, et particulièrement Milton et Klopstock. Si donc on veut établir une de ces comparaisons qui fixent dans la mémoire deux noms associés, pour se rappeler et se définir l'un l'autre, on peut dire, et ce sera le résumé de ce travail; que la Divine Comédie est la Somme littéraire et philosophique du moyen âge; et Dante, le saint Thomas d'Aquin de la poésie."

rich and varied knowledge of the writer ; but he assigns various motives as inducing him to compose it.

A desire to convince the Italians, by precept and example, of the great excellence of their vernacular language, and to make them sensible to the shame of continuing to despise and neglect it. A sense of duty, which seemed to call upon him to satisfy, as far as he was able, the thirst for knowledge natural to man ; by instructing the willing and humble, who have little opportunity of acquiring knowledge, “ *coloro che non sedevano a quella mensa ove il pane degli angeli si mangia\**,” and by imparting freely to such rightly-disposed disciples the mental stores which he was conscious of possessing. A hope to remove the unfavourable impression which attends a sentence of banishment, however unjust, and to raise himself in the estimation of those who depreciated him, from witnessing his abject condition. Lastly, an anxiety to correct a prevailing error which he considered most injurious to his fame, the ascribing to the mere passion of love the greater part of his poems, which, though written under the colouring of that passion, were intended to inculcate only the purest morality. At the same time, he guards against the supposition of his wishing to express any disapprobation of his earlier work, the *Vita Nuova*, and says that, on the contrary, he means to confirm it and make it better understood : “ *E se nella presente opera, la quale è Convito nominata, e vo' che sia, più virilmente si trattasse che nella Vita Nuova, non intendo però a quella in parte alcuna derogare, ma maggiormente giovare per questa quella†.*”

\* Convito, Trat. 1. c. 1.

† Ibid.

He concludes his prelude to the *Convito* as follows:—"The *Vita Nuova* is naturally and properly ardent and impassioned; the *Convito* temperate and manly; for it is becoming to speak and act differently at different periods of life; certain manners being fit and praiseworthy at one age, which are unseemly and blamable at another. The former work was composed before my entrance into the season of youth\*, the latter after that season had passed away. And since my true meaning, in the canzoni alluded to, has been misunderstood, and differs from what they exhibit externally, it is my intention to give their internal and allegorical sense after explaining the literal; so that the two together may be acceptable to the taste of the guests who come to this banquet; all of whom are entreated, if the entertainment should not prove as splendid as this announcement leads them to expect, that they will ascribe every deficiency to my want of power and not to want of will, which cannot be exceeded in love and liberality."

He afterwards unfolds the plan of his proposed comment, and says that his poetry, like the Scriptures, should be considered under four points of view,—a literal and allegorical, a moral and an anagogical.

The literal sense, he says, is a mantle under which the allegorical is concealed; the allegorical is a truth concealed under a beautiful fiction, "*una verità ascosa sotto una bella*

\* Dante divides the ages of man thus:—*Puerizia*, Boyhood, 1 to 10; *Adolescenza*, Adolescence, 10 to 25; *Gioventute*, Youth, 25 to 45; *Senectute*, Old-age, 45 to 70; *Senio*, Decrepitude, 70 to 80.—(Conv. Tr. iv. c. xxiv. taken in connection with the *Vita Nuova* and the canzone "*Ei m' incresce di me*," &c.)

*menzogna*\*." He exemplifies the literal and allegorical sense by the fable of Ovid, which relates that Orpheus tamed the beasts with his lyre, and made the trees and stones to follow him; meaning, he says, that the wise man, by the instrument of his voice, can tame and civilize the barbarian, and make those obedient to his will who are ignorant both of science and of art, for rightly may such men be compared to stocks and stones. A third sense, he says, is the moral, which every reader should intently consider for his own benefit and that of those whom he instructs. A fourth is the anagogical sense, in which a writing is spiritually understood, and the things signified by the letter signify also things heavenly and of eternal glory; as in that Psalm† of the Prophet, which says, that by the departure of the people of Israel from Egypt, Judah was made holy and free; which is most clearly true in the literal sense, and is not less so when spiritually understood; meaning, that by departure from sin the soul is made holy and free‡.

He adverts again to the four views under which his poem should be studied, in the dedication of the *Paradiso*, the canticle of the *Commedia* which is more peculiarly theological,

\* It is worthy of remark, that Dante sometimes makes the letter include and conceal two distinct allegories. Thus, in the opening scene of the *Commedia*, the three beasts which stop the advancement of the poet, the Panther, the Lion, and the Wolf, represent in a moral sense, Incontinence, Ambition, and Covetousness; and represent in a political sense, Florence, France, and Rome. It is observable too, that Pietro, the son of Dante, in his comment, and the old commentators generally, have not thought proper to disclose this political allegory, which Dionisi and others have shown to be unquestionable.

† Psalm 114.

‡ Convito, Trat. 2. cap. 1.

and uses the same illustration, taken from the beginning of the hundred and fourteenth Psalm :

“ *In exitu Israel.*”

“When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a strange land, Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion.” He gives the interpretation of the verse thus in detail. “If we look to the letter,” he says, “we see the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses signified ; if we look to the allegory, we see our redemption through Christ signified ; if to the moral sense, we see the return of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace ; if to the anagogical sense, we see the passage of the sanctified soul from the slavery of mortal corruption to the freedom of eternal glory.”

We will give a single example of Dante’s application of this mode of interpreting the poems of the *Convito*, by taking the first line of the first canzone,

“Voi che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete ;”

“Ye who by intellect the third heaven move.”

We shall greatly abridge his comment upon it, but give enough for explanation, and to excite some surprise that flowers so fanciful should be seen

“Amid the cypress with which Dante crown’d  
His visionary brow\*.”

In justice to Dante, it may be proper to apprise the reader that the viands at this banquet are not all of a quality so singular and transcendent.

To understand the literal sense of this line, we have to in-

\* Wordsworth’s Sonnet.

quire, he says, what is the third heaven, and who are its movers; the answer is, the heaven is that of Venus, and its movers are the angels called Thrones.

For, according to Ptolemy, the moveable heavens are nine\*, and their order, in an ascending series, is this:—

The Moon,	Mercury,	Venus,
The Sun,	Mars,	Jupiter,
Saturn,	The Starry Heaven,	The Crystalline Heaven,

beyond which is a tenth heaven that is at rest, the Empyreum, the more peculiar dwelling of the Divinity.

According to St. Gregory, the orders of angels are nine, divided into three hierarchies, and ranking thus in an ascending series towards the Deity:—

Angels,	Archangels,	Thrones,
Dominions,	Virtues,	Principalities,
Powers,	Cherubim,	Seraphim†.

Each of these orders of angels has in its charge a heaven of corresponding rank in the series; and, consequently, that of Thrones being third has the superintendence of the third heaven. And thus is shown, that in the literal sense of the verse,

*“Voi che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete,”*

the poet invokes the celestial intelligences called Thrones, who direct the motions of the planet Venus.

To explain the allegorical sense, he says, “by heaven I mean science, by the heavens, the sciences; an analogy be-

\* Convito, Trat. 2. c. 4.

† A different arrangement is made by St. Dionysius, and adopted as the true. See ‘Par.,’ c. x. 115, c. xxviii. 120.

tween them being observable in various respects, but more especially in their conformity in number and order." He then gives three fanciful points of general similitude, and proceeds to show that the third heaven properly represents the science of rhetoric, and consequently that its movers are the rhetoricians. "We are first to observe," he says, "that the seven heavens nearest to us are those of the sun, moon, and planets, above which are two that are moveable, and one above all that is at rest. To the seven first heavens correspond the seven sciences, which are divided into Trivium and Quadrivium; thus Trivium comprehends

Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric,

which answer to

The Moon, Mercury, and Venus;

Quadrivium comprehends

Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astrology,

which answer to

The Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.

"To the eighth, or starry heaven, correspond Physics and Metaphysics; to the ninth, the crystalline heaven, or Primum Mobile, corresponds the divine science of theology."

The propriety of the allegory which compares each heaven to each science respectively is minutely pointed out, of which one specimen shall suffice. "The third heaven, or heaven of Venus, may be compared to rhetoric," he says, "by two peculiarities; one is the clearness of the aspect of that planet, which is softer and more attractive than that of any other star; the other is, that her appearance is at one time as the morning, and at another as the evening star; peculiarities

which, by similitude, are seen in rhetoric; for it is the most pleasing and engaging of all the sciences, persuasion being its principal aim. It is like the morning-star when the voice of the rhetorician is heard in face of the listener, and is like the evening-star when his voice is supplied in a far-distant land by the eloquence of a letter\*."

He concludes thus: "By these similitudes may be seen who are the movers of the third heaven of whom I speak: movers like Boëtius and Cicero, who by the beams of the star of Venus (that is, by their writings) instigated me to the love (that is, to the study) of that fairest and most excellent lady, the beautiful and pure daughter of the emperor of the universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy; the lady of whom I became enamoured when the loss of my first love had deprived me of the prime delight of my soul."

The first canzone of the *Convito*,

*Voi che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete,*

is referred to in the *Paradiso*, where Dante converses in the third heaven with the spirit of his friend and patron, Charles Martel, the king of Hungary†: it relates the struggle between two rival and virtuous affections for the mastery, and may be called "The Triumph of Philosophy."

The second canzone,

*Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona,*

is the song of Casella‡,

"Whom Dante woo'd to sing,

Met in the milder shades of Purgatory§;"

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\* Conv. Tr. ii. c. 14. See Pederzini's note, Ediz. Modena, 1831.

† Par. viii. 37.

‡ Purg. ii. 112.

§ Milton's Sonnet.



and the subject is "The Beauty of Philosophy," which is praised under the symbol of a lady, adorned with every personal and mental beauty that the eye and imagination of a poet discovers in his first love.

The third canzone,

*Le dolci rime d'Amor ch'io solla,*

treats of "The Friend of Philosophy" or "True Nobility," with which she is united in the strictest bonds.

Dante has been careful to leave no doubt of the sense in which he means the term Philosophy to be understood, and that Christianity is to be considered as its basis; as if he had anticipated a modern acceptance of the term, and the possibility of its being used to the perversion of its true meaning and of his intentions.

He tells us, that in its literal and etymological sense it signifies the love of wisdom; and that the term 'philosopher' was first used by Pythagoras, when he modestly denied that he was a wise man, and would only allow that he was a lover of wisdom.

It is clear that in the allegorical sense, the lady who is the subject of all his moral canzoni is not merely Philosophy, but the catholic philosophy of the thirteenth century. In a conventional sense, those sciences which we love and study, the noblest of which is theology, are called Philosophy. In a more enlarged sense, Philosophy signifies the whole body of the sciences, or Wisdom itself. In a still loftier sense, it is the wisdom which, in the language of Solomon, was with the Deity "when he prepared the heavens and set a com-

pass upon the face of the deep." (Prov. viii. 27.) "In a moral sense it is," says Dante, "a habit of the exercise of wisdom combined with love, which is manifested most conspicuously in the Deity, for in Him is all wisdom and all love continually exercised with omnipotence: '*Filosofia è uno amoroso uso di sapienza, il quale massimamente è in Dio, perocchè in lui è somma sapienza, e sommo amore, e sommo atto.*' In an anagogical sense, Philosophy is the incarnate Word, '*Che per noi dirizzare in nostra similitudine venne a noi.*'"

"Do ye then," says Dante, "who are not able to come into the presence of Philosophy, honour her in honouring the wise who love her; obey their commandments as teachers who announce to you the will of this eternal empress of the universe; shut not your ears to Solomon, who says, '*The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day\**;' but follow in their path, observing their ways, which to you should be a light to guide you in this uncertain and brief journey of life†."

Dante closes the *Convito* with a comment on the envoy of the canzone on "True Nobility."

"Contra gli erranti, mia, tu te n' andrai:  
E quando tu sarai  
In parte dove sia la donna nostra,  
Non le tenere il tuo mestier coverto.  
Tu le puoi dir per certo:  
Io vo parlando dell' amica vostra."

He says, "*Contra gli erranti* is the title I would give to this canzone, in imitation of the title *Contra i Gentili*,

\* Prov. iv. 18.

† Conv. Tr. iii. c. 15.

given by the excellent Fra Tommaso d' Aquino to the work which he composed to the confusion of all those who stray from our faith.

“*Tu te n' andrai.* In these words I bid my canzone depart; as much as to say, thou art now perfected, this is not a time for inactivity, thou art called away, and urgent is thy enterprise; and when thou shalt arrive where our lady is, declare to her thy object. Here, it is proper to remark, he says, that in the same manner as it is said in Scripture, ‘Cast not your pearls to swine,’ which would profit them nothing and the pearls would be lost; and as Æsop in his fable says, a pearl is of less value than a grain of wheat to the cock, who therefore picks up the corn and rejects the gem, so I, bearing this in mind, instruct and command the canzone that it should only unfold its object where this lady is, that is, where it shall find Philosophy. And she, the noblest of ladies, will be found where we find her dwelling-place, that is, the mind in which she abides. And this Philosophy is not found in the wise only, but in all in whom the love of her exists; to such then I direct my canzone to make known its design, for to them it will be profitable, and they will gather up its sentiments eagerly. I further direct the canzone to say to this lady, ‘*Io vo parlando dell' amica vostra;*’ and truly may it be said that Nobility is the friend of Philosophy, for such is their mutual love, that Nobility ever seeks her, and Philosophy never elsewhere turns her sweet and affectionate regard. O how great then and how beautiful is the praise which is due and is here given to Nobility, in calling her the

beloved of Philosophy whose dwelling-place is the inscrutable mind of the Deity!"

We shall conclude these evidences of the Christian character of the Philosophy of the *Convito* with the eloquent words of Ozanam, the latest of the many able defenders of the orthodoxy of Dante, whose satire, provoked by the enormous abuses of the Church of Rome, and exasperated by personal injustice and suffering, breathes an anti-papal spirit so virulent and unqualified, that it could not fail to subject him to a suspicion of heresy\*, and has even made Protestants claim him as their earliest champion.

"Nous trouvons nous ramenés à notre point de départ, à cette fresque admirable du Saint-Sacrement de Raphael au Vatican où Dante est confondu parmi les docteurs†, à ces hommages solennels et populaires que l'Italie lui a décernés : nous savons maintenant la raison de sa gloire. C'est que la conscience qu'il avait de ses prodigieuses facultés ne lui avait pas fait oublier la fatalité commune de la nature condamnée jusqu'à la fin à souffrir et à ignorer, par conséquent à croire et à servir. Si élevé qu'il fût au dessus des autres hommes, il ne pensait pas que la distance qui les sépare du ciel fût

\* In the Index Expurgatorius of Spain, "Matriti 1614," the following passages of the *Commedia*, together with the comments upon them of Landino and Vellutello, are condemned and forbidden :—*Inf.* xi. 8, 9 ; *Inf.* xix. 106 to 118 ; *Parad.* ix. 136 to end of the canto. No edition, however, of the *Commedia* has omitted these prohibited verses or comments.

† It is remarkable that Raphael has placed the unfortunate Savonarola immediately behind him. Could Dante's fate have been different if the *Commedia* had been circulated generally in his life-time, and he had been brought before the Inquisition ?

diminuée pour lui ; il leur portait trop de respect et d'amour pour chercher à leur imposer la tyrannie de ses opinions personnelles, pour vouloir se détacher d'eux en ce qu'ils ont de plus cher leurs croyances : il demeura dans la communion des idées éternelles, où se trouvent la vie et le salut du genre humain : il fit que les plus humbles de ses contemporains et les plus éloignés de leurs descendants pussent l'appeler leur frère et jouir de ses triomphes.—Six cents ans ont passé depuis que le vieil Alighieri s'est endormi à Ravenne sous le marbre sépulcral. Depuis lors se sont succédé vingt générations d'hommes parlans, selon l'énergique expression des Grecs ; et les paroles qui sont tombées de leurs bouches, plus encore que la poussière de leurs pas, ont renouvelé la face de l'univers. Le Saint Empire Romain n'est plus. Les querelles qui agitaient les républiques italiennes se sont éteintes avec les républiques elles-mêmes. Le Palais des Prieurs de Florence est désert, et sur l'autre rive de l'Arno une dynastie acclimatée par ses bienfaits, porte paisiblement le sceptre grand-ducal de la Toscane. On ne connaît plus le lieu où reposent les cendres de Beatrix, et le nom même de sa famille serait perdu s'il ne se trouvait inscrit parmi les fondateurs d'un hôpital obscur. Les chaires où dissertaient les maîtres de la scholastique sont restées muettes. Les navigateurs ont exploré ces mers lointaines, autrefois fermées par une crainte superstitieuse ; et au lieu de la montagne du Purgatoire et de ses immortels habitans, ils y ont vu des rivages et des peuples semblables aux nôtres. Le télescope a plongé dans les cieux, et ces neuf sphères qu'on supposait se mouvoir harmonieusement autour de nous se sont enfin dans le vide.

Ainsi se sont évanouis tous les genres d'intérêt politique, élégiaque, scientifique, dont le poème de Dante était redevable aux choses passagères d'ici bas ; il n'aurait plus que le mérite d'un document historique, difficilement appréciable, s'il n'empruntait ailleurs une valeur constante, universelle. Ces mystères de la mort qui préoccupaient les hommes d'autrefois n'ont pas cessé de solliciter nos méditations, et nulle autre lumière que celle du catholicisme n'est venue les éclairer. Comme il guidait les imaginations ardentes de nos pères, il conduit encore nos intelligences adultes et raisonneuses ; il domine tous les développemens des facultés humaines, immuable au milieu des ruines de la vieille science et des constructions de la science nouvelle. Il n'a pas à craindre les Christophe Colomb et les Copernic de l'avenir : car de même que ces deux grands hommes, en découvrant la forme véritable et les relations du globe, ont fixé, une fois pour toutes, les opinions incertaines sur ces deux points principaux du système du monde, et n'ont laissé aux astronomes et aux navigateurs futurs que des découvertes de détail : ainsi le catholicisme, en faisant connaître l'homme et ses relations avec Dieu, a révélé pour toujours le système du monde moral : il ne laisse plus à découvrir une nouvelle terre et de nouveaux cieux ; mais seulement des vérités isolées, des lois subalternes, trop peu pour satisfaire l'orgueil, assez pour captiver longtemps encore l'assiduité laborieuse de l'esprit humain\*."

\* Dante et La Philosophie Catholique, par A. F. Ozanam, p. 266.

Dante—“ BEN VEGGIO, padre mio, sì come sprona  
Lo tempo verso me per colpo darmi  
Tal ch' è più grave a chi più s' abbandona :  
Perchè di provedenza è buon ch' io m' armi  
Sì che, se luogo m' è tolto più caro,  
Io non perdessi gli altri per miei carmi.  
Giù per lo mondo senza fine amaro,  
E per lo monte del cui bel cacume  
Gli occhi della mia donna mi levaro,  
E poscia per lo Ciel di lume in lume,  
Ho io appreso quel che s' io ridico,  
A molti fia savor di forte agrume :  
E, s' io al vero son timido amico,  
Temo di perder vita tra coloro  
Che questo tempo chiameranno antico.”  
La luce in che rideva il mio tesoro  
Ch' io trovai lì, si fe' prima corrusca  
Quale a raggio di Sole specchio d' oro :

Cacciaguida—Indi rispose: “ Coscienza fusca  
O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna  
Pur sentirà la tua parola brusca.  
Ma nondimen, rimossa ogni menzogna,  
Tutta tua VISION fa manifesta,  
E lascia pur grattar dov' è la rogna :  
Che se la voce tua sarà molesta  
Nel primo gusto, vital nutrimento  
Lascerà poi quando sarà digesta.  
Questo tuo grido farà come 'l vento  
Che le più alte cime più percuote :  
E ciò non fia d' onor poco argomento.  
Però ti son mostrate, in queste ruote,  
Nel monte, e nella valle dolorosa,  
Pur l' anime che son di fama note :  
Che l' animo di quel ch' ode, non posa,  
Ne ferma fede, per esempio ch' haja  
La sua radice incognita e nascosa,  
Nè per altro argomento che non paja.”

*Par. xvii. 106.*

ON  
THE ANTI-PAPAL SPIRIT  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI.

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THE elegant summary of M. Ozanam's sentiments on the philosophical and religious character of the writings of Dante should have concluded our remarks ; but the striking anti-papal spirit of the *Commedia*, in appearance at least, and especially in passages where it has been exposed for the first time by Professor Rossetti, seems to contradict its justness, and to call for a few further observations.

It had been shown by Dionisi and others, that in the allegory of the three beasts, at the opening of the poem, the wolf, which irresistibly opposes the poet in his endeavour to ascend the hill of Virtue, is a type of the See of Rome. In the passages above alluded to, it is proved to demonstration that the lowest pit of the *Inferno* is intended by Dante to figure the city of Rome\* ; and that the triple-headed Lucifer who is

\* Com. Analitico, vol. ii. p. 531.



fixed there\* represents the Pope. Also, that the exclamation of Pluto—

“ Pape Satan, Pape Satan, aleppe,”

in the first line of the seventh canto of the *Inferno*, where the sin of avarice is punished, is to be read thus :

“ Pap è Satan, Pap è Satan, aleppe.”

“ The Pope is Satan, the Pope is Satan, our chief†.”

Satire so virulent and unqualified, which is not levelled against a corrupt individual High Priest merely, but is unrestricted, and seems to attack the office itself, was dangerous and indefensible ; and therefore the old commentators wisely forbore to withdraw the veil which concealed it from the vulgar.

In the *Inferno* we are shown Pope Celestine the Fifth among the crowd who are unworthy to cross the Acheron, and are tormented for having lived contemptibly, in apathy and selfishness, without any decided character, or any deed deserving to be remembered.

“ Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro  
Degli angeli che non furon ribelli  
Ne fur' fedeli a Dio ; ma per se foro.”

*Inf.* iii. 37.

“ This miserable fate  
Suffer the wretched souls of those, who lived  
Without or praise or blame ; with that ill band  
Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious proved  
Nor yet were true to God ; but for themselves  
Were only.”

*Cary.*

\* “ Il maledetto, Da tutti i pesi del mondo costretto.” *Par.* xxix. 55.

“ Nel punto Al qual si traggon d'ogni parte i pesi.” *Inf.* xxxiv. 3.

† Spirito Antipapale, cap. 5.

We see Pope Anastasius the Second in a burning tomb suffering the punishment assigned to heresy (*Inf.* xi.)\*.

We see Pope Nicholas the Third in torture for simony (*Inf.* xix.). We see a pit prepared for the punishment of Boniface the Eighth for the same crime (*Inf.* xix.), into which pit his successor, Clement the Fifth, is also to be plunged at death (*Inf.* xix.).

“ Ma poco poi sarà da Dio sofferto  
 Nel santo officio : ch’el sarà detruso  
 Là dove Simon Mago è per suo merto,  
 E farà quel d’Alagna esser più giuso.”

*Par.* xxx. 145.

“ Him God will not endure  
 I’ the’ holy office long ; but thrust him down  
 To Simon Magus, where Alagna’s priest  
 Will sink beneath him : such will be his meed.”

*Cary.*

In the *Purgatorio* we find but two Popes: Adrian the Fifth, who is paying the penalty of his avarice (*Purg.* xix.), and Martin the Fourth of his gluttony (*Purg.* xxiv.).

In the *Paradiso* not a single pope is met with†. Even the excellent and impartial pontiff Benedict the Eleventh, whose short reign intervened between Boniface and Clement, and

\* A blow, Foscolo observes, to the doctrine of Papal infallibility. “O sia che il poeta avesse appurato il vero, o si stesse alla tradizione del fatto, se ne giovò ad ogni modo con animo di negare la dottrina dell’ infallibilità del Sommo Pontefice anche ne’ dogmi.”—*Foscolo, Discorso Sez.* clxxxvi. Londra, 1842.

† Pietro Ispano cannot be quoted as an exception ; he is introduced in *Par.* xii. 134, but is not mentioned by Dante or the old commentators as having become Pope, though Cary, following Mariana, considers him to be John the Twenty-First.

who exerted himself so much in favour of the exiled Ghibellines, is never mentioned. •

How are we to account for satire so sweeping and unjust? Is it that the image of Boniface the Eighth was always present to Dante's mind, and allowed him not to see any other character in a pope than that of his enemy?

Was it designed to gratify the Emperor, who was in fierce collision with the Pope, and on whom the Ghibelline exile's hope of restoration to his country and fortune entirely depended? Or like St. Bernard two centuries earlier\*, did a virtuous zeal and disgust at the unchristian conduct of the hierarchy provoke him to proclaim that the prophetic vision of the Apocalypse was realized; that Rome was Babylon, and the Pope was Lucifer and Antichrist? We are convinced that the unmeasured censure of the Church throughout the *Commedia*, and particularly in the magnificent allegory of the mystical car (*Purg.* c. xxix.)†, was the result of feelings as ardent and indignant as St. Bernard's, and of a painful conviction of the necessity of a great and speedy reformation; but at the same time that, notwithstanding the bitterness of his hostility, Dante was a faithful member of the Church of

\* See Bishop Hurd's Seventh Sermon on the Prophecies.

† (*Purg.* c. xxix.) The Car is the Church of Rome; the Gryphon which draws it is Christ in his double nature; the Eagle, which first tears it and then enriches it with his plumes, is the Roman Empire; the Fox, which insidiously darts at it, is heresy; the Dragon, that tears the bed of the car, is the demon of avarice and schism; the brutal Giant, seated in the car, is Philip the Fourth of France; and the Woman at his side is the woman of Babylon, the Antichrist, the Pope, who

“Puttaneggiar co' regi a lui fu vista.” (*Inf.* xix. 108.)

Rome, "Pius in Christum, pius in Ecclesiam, pius in Pastorem."—*De Monarchia*.

It cannot be denied that, irritated by personal wrongs and party spirit, Dante indulged in such satire of the vices of the Church, and such invectives against its head, as were imprudent and censurable, and must even have had a tendency, in a popular work like the *Commedia*, injurious to religion itself. Silvio Pellico has therefore ingeniously supposed a death-bed repentance of Dante, and made it the subject of a poem, *La Morte di Dante*, to which he has annexed the following appropriate preface:—

"Non ho mai capito in qual modo Dante, perch' egli fra i magnanimi suoi versi ne ha alcuni iratissimi di varii generi, sia potuto sembrare ai nemici della Chiesa Cattolica un loro corifeo; cioè un rabbioso filosofo, il quale o non credesse nulla, o professasse un cristianesimo diverso dal Romano. Tutto il suo poema, a chi di buona fede lo legga, e non per impegno di sistema, attesta un pensatore, sì, ma sdegnoso di scismi e d'eresie, e consonissimo a tutte le cattoliche dottrine. Giovani, che sì giustamente ammirate quel sommo, studiatelo col vostro nativo candore, e scorgerete che non volle mai esservi maestro di furori e d'incredulità, ma bensì di virtù religiose e civili."

The satire of Petrarch upon the Court of Rome, then at Avignon, is not less bitter, nor less reprehensible, if intended to be disseminated generally, than that of Dante; as will appear by his three celebrated sonnets, which we shall give entire.

#### SONETTO CV.

"Fiamma dal ciel su le tue treccie piova,  
Malvagia, che dal fiume e dalle ghiande  
Per l'altru' impoverir se' ricca e grande,  
Poi che di mal oprar tanto ti giova.

“ Nido di tradimenti, in cui si cova  
Quanto mal per lo mondo oggi si spande,  
Di vin serva, di letti, e di vivande,  
In cui lussuria fa l' ultima prova.  
“ Per le camere tue fanciulle e vecchi  
Vanno trescando, e Belzebub in mezzo  
Co' mantici e col foco e con gli specchi.  
“ Già non fostu nudrita in piume al rezzo,  
Ma nuda al vento e scalza fra li stecchi ;  
Or vivi sì, ch' a Dio ne venga il lezzo.”

## SONETTO CVI.

“ L' avara Babilonia ha colmo 'l sacco  
D' ira di Dio e di vizj empj e rei  
Tanto, che scoppia, ed ha fatti suoi dei  
Non Giove e Palla, ma Venere e Bacco.  
“ Aspettando ragion mi struggo e fiacco ;  
Ma pur novo soldan veggio per lei,  
Lo qual farà, non già quand' io vorrei  
Sol una sede, e quella fia in Baldacco.  
“ Gl' idoli suoi saranno in terra sparsi ;  
E le torri superbe al ciel nemiche,  
E i suoi torrier di for, come dentro, arsi.  
“ Anime belle e di virtute amiche  
Terranno 'l mondo, e poi vedrem lui farsi  
Aureo tutto, e pien dell' opre antiche.”

## SONETTO CVII.

“ Fontana di dolore, albergo d' ira,  
Scola d' errori, e tempio d' eresia,  
Già Roma, or Babilonia falsa e ria,  
Per cui tanto si piagne e si sospira.  
“ O fucina d' inganni, o prigion dira,  
Ove 'l ben more, e 'l mal si nutre e cria,  
Di vivi inferno, un gran miracol fia  
Se Cristo teco al fine non s' adira.



“Fondata in casta ed umil povertate,  
 Contr’ a’ tuoi fondatori alzi le corna,  
 Putta spacciata ; e dov’ hai posto spene ?

“Negli adulteri tuoi ? nelle mal nate  
 Ricchezze tante ? or Costantin non torna ;  
 Ma tolga il mondo tristo che ’l sostiene.”

The apparent anti-papal spirit of these sonnets cannot be surpassed. Many of his epistles are in the same strain\* ; yet who has ever called the religious principles of Petrarch in question, or believed him the enemy of papacy ?

The satire of Boccaccio is still more abundant, licentious and poignant†. These three illustrious geniuses, in a manner contemporaries‡, men of very different character, but in unison on this one theme, formed the great triumvirate whose writings most powerfully nourished the seeds of the Catholic Reformation of the sixteenth century, and, unwittingly, of Protestantism and the hydra Dissent.

There is yet an inquiry to be made. Was there at that period an extreme Ghibelline party in Italy to whom no satire or outrage upon the sovereign pontiff, the chief of the Guelphs, could appear too violent, and whose anti-papal views were directed to changes of a bolder cast than the mere correction of notorious clerical abuses ? Was it of the members of such a party, or of reformers wise, bold and temperate, that the supposed sect, the *Setta d’Amore*, was composed ? Professor

\* Spirito Antip. cap. 1—2.

† Sp. Antip.

‡ Dante born 1265. Died 1321.

Petrarch — 1304. — 1374.

Boccaccio — 1313. — 1375.

Rossetti maintains that such a sect existed ; that it had a secret object and a conventional language, of which he has discovered the key ; that it was constituted on the plan of the ancient mysteries, and had a ceremonial which originated in Egypt, and is handed down to us in the rites of modern masonry ; that Dante was a member of this sect, and that his figurative journey through the three regions of the spiritual world is a picture of his own *Initiation*, which is obscurely indicated in the *Vita Nuova*, and fully developed in the *Commedia* ; and further, that the Beatrice of the *Vita Nuova*, *Convito* and *Commedia*, is a personification of the *summum arcanum*, the secret object of that society.

We immediately and anxiously ask, what then was the supposed secret object of these Freemasons of the thirteenth century ? Did it resemble that of the continental masons five hundred years later, as exposed by Barruel\* and Robison†, or may we hope that it is characterized in the old verses given by Picart‡ ?—

“ Fidèle à Dieu, fidèle au roi,  
A sa patrie, à sa bergère ;  
Loyal au jeu, ferme au tournoi,  
Plein d’indulgence pour son frère,  
Tendre ami de l’humanité,  
Esclave de la vérité,  
C’est à ces traits que nous reconnaitrons  
Les véritables Francs-Maçons.”

These are inquiries and doubts that are forced upon us by the perfectly original ideas of Professor Rossetti, which he has

\* Mémoires du Jacobinisme, 1793.    † Proofs of a Conspiracy, 1793.  
‡ Cérémonies Religieuses, 1723.

supported with great learning and eloquence, in his 'Comento Analitico della Commedia' and 'Lo Spirito Antipapale del Medio Evo'; but as yet his system has failed to convince the critics, and has met with formidable opposition. A new work of his, '*La Beatrice di Dante*,' is about to appear, and is impatiently looked for both by friends and opponents of his interpretation of Dante, who are unanimous in their admiration of his talents, and equally desirous of further information on many points connected with his novel idea of the amatory poetry of the Middle Ages. Of this new work we hope he may say,

"Vedrai Beatrice; ed ella pienamente  
Ti torrà questa e ciascun'altra brama." (Purg. xv. 77.)

In the mean time, without adverting to his peculiar views, it may not be unprofitable to show the foundation of our own, by giving a few extracts from Dante, which are intended to establish his veneration of the Church of Rome, his respect and deference towards its head, his abhorrence of schism, his religious and political liberality, and his desire of the correction in the Church of abuses only, and the restoration of its primitive virtue.

Dante, in the epistle sent to Kan Grande along with the *Paradiso*, says, "The end of the work and its parts may be considered more than one, inasmuch as it concerns what is of nearer or remoter interest; but laying aside all subtle investigation, it may be said briefly, that the end of the whole work and of each part is to deliver those who are living in this world from their state of misery, and to direct them to a state of happiness. *Finis totius et partis esse posset multiplex, scilicet propinquus et remotus. Sed omissa subtili in-*



vestigatione, dicendum est breviter, quod finis totius et partis est, remove vivere in hac vita de statu miseræ, et perducere ad statum felicitatis." He thus expressly declares that the ideal, spiritual world, peopled by the souls of the dead, represented in the *Commedia*, is also a picture of the world of the living, viewed under three different conditions; under its actual state of misery (*Inferno*), its imaginable future state of amendment (*Purgatorio*), and finally, in a state of happiness (*Paradiso*). The *Commedia* is understood in this double sense by the excellent old commentator Benvenuto da Imola:—

"Materia sive subjectum hujus libri est status animæ humanæ tam vivente corpore quam a corpore separatæ. Qui status universaliter est triplex; sicut auctor facit tres partes de toto opere. Quædam enim anima est cum peccatis; et illa, dum vivit cum corpore, est mortua moraliter loquendo, et sic est in Inferno morali: dum est separata a corpore est in Inferno essentiali, si obstinata insanabiliter moriatur. Alia anima est quæ recedit a vitiis: ista dum est in corpore, est in Purgatorio morali, seu in actu pœnitentiæ in quo purgat sua peccata: separata vero est in Purgatorio essentiali. Alia anima est quæ est in perfecto habitu virtutis, et jam vivens in corpore est quodammodo in Paradiso quia est in quadam felicitate quantum est possibile in hac vita miseræ: separata autem est in Paradiso cœlesti ubi est vera et perfecta felicitas, ubi fruitur visione Dei."\*

In an indirect manner Dante declares his Inferno to be Italy; for the city of Dis (*Inf.* c. viii.) is clearly Florence†, and the Pozzo centrale di Malebolge (*Inf.* c. xxxi.) is as

\* Ozanam, p. 77.

† Com. Anal. v. i. p. 260.

clearly Rome\*. The miserable condition of the whole peninsula, in the age of Dante, is undisputed matter of history, which records a general demoralization, attributed mainly to the corrupt example of the priesthood and especially of the Head of the Church, and to the perpetual strife among the different independent states, and the rival factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, which was fomented by the ambition of the Popes, in their struggle with the Emperor to obtain a predominant influence. To expose these evils, and to remove them by effecting a reformation in the civil and religious condition of the country, is the immediate object, the “*finis propinquus*,” of the *Commedia*, which was invented, Dante says, not for a speculative but entirely for a practical purpose, “*Non ad speculandum, sed ad opus inventum est totum (Ep. ad Kan Gran)*.”

The two leading objects of the reform are openly disclosed in the *De Monarchia*, and with little disguise in the *Commedia*; they consist in the project of forming all the independent states of Italy into a federal government having the Emperor for its head, and in restricting the supreme power of the Pope to spiritualities alone. To effect this last great change, the states of the Church were to be restored to the Empire, from which, he maintains, they had been illegally severed by Constantine and others: “*Constantinus alienare non poterat Imperii dignitatem, nec Ecclesia recipere. Scindere Imperium, Imperatori non licet.*”—*De Monarchia*, lib. iii.

Both sovereigns were to be entirely independent of each

\* Com. Anal. v. ii. p. 531.

other; and like two suns, the one of temporal, the other of spiritual influence, were to shed vigour and happiness throughout the universe. The rights of the Emperor were to be defined by laws, framed on the principle that the monarch is constituted for the people, not the people for the monarch. "Non enim cives propter consules, nec gens propter regem, sed e converso, Consules propter cives, Rex propter gentem." (*De Monarchia*.)

The rights of the Pope were to be supreme in religion, and no limitation of power is expressly stated: some check however must have been contemplated, to guard against human fallibility, and a continuance of the monstrous abuse of excommunication, which experience had shown to be incompatible with the independence of sovereigns and national tranquillity.

"Già si solea con le spade far guerra;  
Ma or si fa togliendo or qui or quivi  
Lo pan che 'l pio Padre a nessun serra."

*Par. c. xviii. 127.*

"War once had for its instrument the sword;  
But now 't is made, taking the bread away  
Which the good Father locks from none."

*Cary.*

By the union of the states of Italy under a powerful but limited monarch, Dante persuaded himself that liberty and social order, and peace, both foreign and domestic, would be best secured\*. He hoped too that by the ecclesiastical re-

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\* "Inter alia bona hominis potissimum sit in pace vivere. Pax universalis est optimum eorum quæ ad nostram utilitatem ordinantur. Conclusio certa est quod ad optimam mundi dispositionem necesse est Monarcham esse."—*De Monarchia*, lib. i.

"Dante volle persuadere che la voglia di mantenere ciascun paese la sua

form morality and religion would be restored; and that the Pope, by being deprived of temporal sovereignty, the great incentive to ambition and political intrigue, would devote his energies to the good government of the Church and the improvement of the moral condition of the Christian world, and that the age of gold would be renewed.

“Anime belle e di virtute amiche  
Terranno il mondo, e poi vedrem lui farsi  
Aureo tutto, e pien dell’opre antiche.”

*Petrarca.*

The *De Monarchia* is a most important work in illustrating the *Commedia* and in declaring the political principles of Dante, and must have been most offensive to the See of Rome, which asserted the indefeasible and indispensable right of crowning the Emperor. Its argument is, that a universal Monarch is necessary for the welfare of mankind, that the Roman Emperor is of right that Monarch, and that he owes not his crown to the Pope, but to God alone. Dante concludes the work however with the following strong expression of his respect for the Catholic religion and its Head:—“The true decision of this question is not to be so strictly interpreted as to imply that the Roman Prince is in no respect subjected to the Roman Pontiff; for felicity in this mortal life is ordained only for the attainment of that which is immortal; let Cæsar then show that reverence to Peter which a first-born son owes to his father; so that he, being illumined with

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libertà, senza la dipendenza da una potestà superiore a tutti, commettea discordia fra le città, e le urtava in perpetua guerra: la quale gl’Italiani con le stesse loro forze consumava.”—*Gravina Rag. Poet.*

the light of paternal grace, may have the more virtue to illumine the circle of the earth, over which he is placed by Him who is Governor of all things spiritual and temporal\*."

The evils that had ensued from the grant of territory by Constantine to Pope Sylvester, and from the union of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, are denounced in various parts of the *Commedia*.

#### IN THE INFERNO.

"*Di voi Pastor s'accorse il Vangelista.*" (*Inf.* xix. 106—117.)

"Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist  
Was ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,  
With kings in hateful commerce, he beheld;  
She who with seven heads tower'd at her birth,  
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,  
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.  
Of gold and silver ye have made your god,  
Differing wherein from the idolater,  
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?  
Ah Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower  
Which the first wealthy Father gain'd from thee!"

Cary.

#### IN THE PURGATORIO.

"*Però, se 'l mondo presente disvia.*" (*Purg.* xvi. 82—114.)

"If then the present race of mankind err,  
Seek in yourselves the cause, and find it there.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Young from her Maker's hand, the soul inclines

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\* There is much that is strange, fanciful and impracticable in this curious political pamphlet, which has been omitted. It was condemned to be burnt, as heretical, by Cardinal Poggetto, legate of John XXII.; it was condemned also, together with Dante's letter to the Sovereigns of Italy, by the Council of Trent.—See *Balbo, Vita di Dante*.

To whate'er yields her joy. Of some slight good  
 The flavor soon she tastes ; and, snared by that,  
 With fondness she pursues it, if no guide  
 Recal, no rein direct her wandering course.  
 Hence it behoved, whose piercing view  
 Might mark at least the fortress and main tower  
 Of the true city. Laws indeed there are,  
 But who is he observes them ? None ; not he,  
 Who goes before, the shepherd of the flock ;  
 Who chews the cud, but doth not cleave the hoof.  
 Therefore the multitude, who see their guide  
 Strike at the very good they covet most,  
 Feed there and look no farther. Thus the cause  
 Is not corrupted nature in yourselves,  
 But ill-conducting, that hath turn'd the world  
 To evil. Rome, that turn'd it unto good,  
 Was wont to boast two suns, whose several beams  
 Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.  
 One since hath quench'd the other ; and the sword  
 Is grafted on the crook ; and, so conjoin'd,  
 Each must perforce decline to worse, unaw'd  
 By fear of other. If thou doubt me, mark  
 The blade : each herb is judged of by its seed."

Cary.

## IN THE PARADISO.

" *L' altro che segue, con le leggi e meco.*" (Par. xx. 55—60.)

" See Constantine, who with Rome's laws and arms  
 Pass'd o'er to Greece, to yield the Shepherd room,  
 From good intent producing evil fruit ;  
 Now knoweth he how all the ill derived  
 From his well-doing doth not harm him aught,  
 Though it have brought destruction on the world."

Cary.

The moral spirit of the *Commedia*, in exciting to good and deterring from evil, is its most prominent feature ; the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* being exhibitions of the misery and punish-

ment of vice ; the *Paradiso* of the happiness and reward of virtue. The duty and advantage of perseverance in good deeds cannot be more beautifully enforced than in these lines of Dante :

“ Per sentir più diletanza,  
Bene operando l' uom, di giorno in giorno,  
S' accorge che la sua virtute avanza.” *Per.* xviii. 58.

“ By sense  
Of new delight, the man who perseveres  
In good deeds, doth perceive from day to day  
His virtue growing.” *Cory.*

The religious spirit of the *Commedia*, and its conformity to the tenets of the Church of Rome, is apparent from the whole plan of the work, and the theological discussions in which it abounds. To prove it therefore by extracts would be superfluous ; but it is remarkable that the points of greatest contention between the Protestants and Romanists two hundred years later, at the Council of Trent, are never alluded to, and we thus have only a negative proof of Dante's approval of the following peculiar tenets :—the obligatory celibacy of the secular as well as regular clergy ; the doctrine of the real presence in the Eucharist ; the administration of the sacramental bread only to the laity, and the restriction of the cup to the priesthood ; also the article of Justification, which, of all the obstacles to reconciliation and the avoiding of schism, proved to be the most insurmountable. The Protestant therefore might perhaps persuade himself, from this silence on the above important articles of religion, that Dante and he were of one mind ; but on the question of the constitution of the Church, and its exclusive right in the interpretation of Scrip-

ture, he has not even this slight ground for belief in their accordance. The acknowledgement in the *Commedia* of absolute supremacy in the Pope, and veneration for the office, is unequivocal. The following may be given as instances:—

In the *De Monarchia* he says: "The question is, whether the authority of the Roman monarch depends immediately upon God, or upon his Vicar or Minister, by whom I mean the successor of Peter, who truly bears the keys of the kingdom of heaven." "Quæritur, utrum autoritas Monarchæ Romani immediatè a Deo dependeat, an ab aliquo Dei Vicario vel Ministro, quem Petri successorem intelligo, qui vere est claviger regni cœlorum."—*De Mon.* lib. iii.

At the beginning of the *Commedia*, he declares Rome to have been elected in the Empyreum for the holy seat of the successor of St. Peter.

"Alma Roma

Fu stabilita per lo loco santo

U' siede il successor del maggior Piero."

*Inf.* ii. 23.

"Rome was in Heaven's empyreal height

Establish'd for the holy place where sits

Who to Saint Peter's sacred chair succeeds."

*Cary.*

That Rome, which, in the pontificate of Boniface the Eighth, was converted, he says, into a mart for daily traffic in the things of religion.

"Là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca."

*Par.* xvii. 51.

"Where gainful merchandise is made of Christ

Throughout the livelong day."

*Cary.*

In the *Inferno*, when, visiting the gulph of the Simoniacs, he utters his abhorrence of the avarice and worldly spirit of Pope Nicholas the Third with bitterness, and tells him he is



restrained from using severer language by reverence for the high office which he held when living.

“Però ti stà, che tu se’ ben punito ;

\* \* \* \*

E se non fosse ch’ ancor lo mi vieta

La riverenza delle somme chiavi

Che tu tenesti nella vita lieta,

Io userei parole ancor più gravi.”

*Inf.* xix. 100.

“Abide thou then ;

Thy punishment of right is merited :

If reverence of the keys restrain’d me not,

Which thou in happier time didst hold, I yet

Severer speech might use.”

*Cary.*

In the *Purgatorio*, when Adrian the Fifth makes himself known,

“Scias quod ego fui successor Petri,”

*Purg.* xix. 99.

“Behold in me Saint Peter’s successor,”

Dante kneels in reverence, saying that conscience justly prompted him to the act, when he considered his high dignity. Adrian’s beautiful reproof must not be omitted.

“Drizza le gambe e leva ti su, frate,

Rispose ; non errar ; conservo sono

Teco e con gli altri ad una potestate.”

*Purg.* xix. 133.

“‘Arise, O brother, from thy knees,’ he said ;

‘Be not deceived ; a fellow-servant I,

And to one Master is our homage paid.’”

*Wright.*

He shows respect to the person and dignity even of his particular enemy, Boniface the Eighth, and condemns with indignation the conduct of Philip the Fourth at Alagna, as an outrage on the Vicar of Christ.

“Veggio in Alagna entrar lo fiordaliso,

E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto.

Veggiolo un' altra volta esser deriso :  
 Veggio rinnovellar l' aceto e 'l fele,  
 E tra vivi ladroni essere anciso." *Purg.* xx. 86.

" I see the flower-de-luce  
 Enter Alagna ; in his Vicar, Christ  
 Himself a captive, and his mockery  
 Acted again. Lo ! to his holy lip  
 The vinegar and gall once more applied ;  
 And he 'twixt living robbers doom'd to bleed." *Cary.*

In the invective of St. Peter, the severest in the whole *Commedia*, which is called forth by the unworthiness of Boniface the Eighth, we see it asserted that the episcopal chair of Rome is the chair of St. Peter.

" Quegli ch' usurpa in terra il luogo mio,  
 Il luogo mio, il luogo mio che vaca  
 Nella presenza del Figliuol di Dio,  
 Fatto ha del cimiterio mio cloaca  
 Del sangue e della puzza, onde il perverso  
 Che cadde di quassù, laggiù si placa." *Par.* xxvii. 22.

" He who on earth my place,  
 My place usurps, my place which in the eyes  
 Of God's own Son is vacant, hath long space,  
 Render'd my burial-ground a sink abhorr'd  
 Of blood and filth, which to the inveterate foe  
 Who fell from heaven doth high delight afford." *Wright.*

It is necessary to bear the instruction of Dante always in mind,—

" O voi ch' avete gl' intelletti sani,  
 Mirate la dottrina che s' asconde  
 Sotto 'l velame delli versi strani," *Inf.* ix. 61.

" O ye, with healthful intellects endow'd,  
 Mark well the secret lore intended here,  
 Which my mysterious minstrelsy would shroud," *Wright.*

and to consider it as a warning not to suppose that the scope of the *Commedia* can be divined from a careless perusal of insulated passages, but only from deep consideration of those that stand in opposition to each other, and a fair adjustment of the balance. Unless due weight is given to the foregoing extracts, there are others which we shall now adduce from each of the *Canticles*, denouncing such heavy and speedy vengeance on the head of the church, as might lead to the erroneous conclusion that they threatened the abolition of the Popedom.

## FROM THE INFERNO.

“ Il veltro  
Verrà, che la \* farà morir con doglia,

\* \* \* \* \*  
Questi la cacerà per ogni villa,  
Finchè l' avrà rimessa nello 'nferno,  
La onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.”

*Inf.* l. 101.

“ A noble hound shall come who shall destroy  
Her † with sharp pain.  
He with incessant chase through every town  
Shall hunt her, till at length he shall to hell  
Restore her, thence by Envy first let loose.”

*Cary.*

## FROM THE PURGATORIO.

“ Ch' io veggio certamente, e però 'l narro,  
A darne tempo già stelle propingue  
Sicure d' ogn' intoppo e d' ogni sbarro,  
Nel quale Un Cinquecento Diece e Cinque ‡  
Messo di Dio anciderà la fuja,  
E quel gigante che con lei delinque.”

*Purg.* xxxiii. 40.

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\* La lupa.

† The wolf.

‡ Tutti quanti consentono a ritrovare le tre sigle numeriche de' Romani

“ Plainly I view, and therefore speak, the stars  
 E’en now approaching, whose conjunction, free  
 From all impediment and bar, brings on  
 A season in the which, one sent from God,  
 (Five hundred, five, and ten, do mark him out)  
 The Spoiler, and th’ accomplice of her guilt,  
 The giant, both, shall slay.” *Cary.*

## FROM THE PARADISO.

“ In veste di pastor lupi rapaci  
 Si veggion di quassù per tutti i paschi.  
 O difesa di Dio perchè pur giaci ! ” *Par. xxvii. 55.*

“ In shepherds’ clothing, greedy wolves below  
 Range wide o’er all the pastures. Arm of God !  
 Why longer sleepest thou ? ” *Cary.*

“ Ma Vaticano e l’ altre parti elette  
 Di Roma, che son state cimitero  
 Alla milizia che Pietro seguette,  
 Tosto libere fien dall’ adultero \*.” *Par. ix. 139.*

“ But soon the Vatican, and places most  
 Throughout the city dear to memory,  
 (Wash’d by the blood of Peter’s faithful host)  
 Shall from the foul adulterer be free.” *Wright.*

In these extracts both the she-wolf (*la lupa*) and the Spoiler (*la faja*) designate the Pope, and the prediction seems to denounce that he shall be driven from the land and totally destroyed ; but when taken in connexion with Dante’s expressions of reverence for the papal dignity, it certainly implies nothing more than that the vices of the head of the church must provoke the speedy arrival of a Reformer, through

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DXV, e l’ anagramma DUX, e il significato latino di Capitano, e il titolo al quale la lega de’ Ghibellini assunse il Sig. di Verona.”—*Foscolo.*

\* Bonifazio era, secondo Dante, doppiamente adultero con la Chiesa, poichè ne aveva cacciato lo sposo legittimo Celestino.”—*Tommasèo.*

whose exertion and power, under the protection of Heaven, the corrupt character of papacy should be changed, and its vices should be seen no more.

This expected Reformer, who is typified by *il Veltro*, the hound, the natural enemy of the wolf, is generally admitted to convey an ingenious stroke of flattery to Kan Grande Della Scala\* (*Canis Grandis*), Lord of Verona, who was chosen Captain-General of the Ghibelline league in 1318, and in whose family Dante first found refuge after his banishment.

“ Lo primo tuo rifugio e ’l primo ostello  
Sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo,  
Che’n su la scala porta il santo uccello.”

Par. xvii. 70.

“ First refuge thou must find, first place of rest,  
In the great Lombard’s courtesy, who bears,  
Upon the ladder perch’d, the sacred bird.”

Cary.

Landino’s comment upon the allegorical Veltro affords such evidence of the public sense of the corrupt state of religion, and at the same time gives so remarkable an instance of the astrological superstition prevailing at the end of the fifteenth century, that it deserves to be here inserted. Landino says, “Io credo che ’l Poeta” &c. &c. I believe that the Poet, who was a perfect mathematician, had observed by astrology that certain revolutions of the heavens were about to occur, through whose

\* “Andò ordine da Papa Giovanni XXII. agli Inquisitori, di fare un processo d’eresia a Cane della Scala, ed altri Capi de’ Ghibellini d’allora; i quali tutti, benchè protestassero di esser buoni Cattolici, e ubbidienti alla Chiesa nello spirituale, pure si trovarono dichiarati eretici, e fu predicata contro di loro la croce. Sempre sarà da desiderare che il Sacerdozio, istituito da Dio per bene delle anime, e per seminar la pace, non entri ad aiutare e fomentar le ambiziose voglie dei principi terreni, e molto più guardi dall’ambizione se stesso.”—*Murat. Ann.* 1319—1320.

benign influence avarice\* would entirely cease. The Veltro then must signify that influence, or rather the Prince who by that influence shall be brought forward; whence he says below, "I see it surely and therefore I relate it." (*Purg.* xxxiii. 40.) And certainly in the year 1484, on the twenty-fifth day of November, at the thirteenth hour (7 P.M.) and forty-one minutes of that day, there will be a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Scorpion, in the ascendant of the fifth degree of Libra, which denotes change in religion; and because Jupiter prevails over Saturn, it signifies that the change will be for the better. Therefore, as it is not possible for any religion to be more true than ours, I must entertain a firm hope that the Christian Republic will be brought back to a perfect life and government, so that we shall be able to say with truth,

"Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna†."

Dante's reprobation of heresy and schism is sufficiently shown by the dreadful punishments assigned to them in the ninth and twenty-eighth Cantos of the *Inferno*. Yet it must

\* Avarice, the wolf and the Pope, are synonyms with Dante.

† Some singular coincidences attend this astrological calculation and prediction. Landino's comment was printed at Florence 30th August, 1481; Luther was born (according to some) in November 1484, in the very year and month predicted. (See Bayle's Dict.) Veltro is the anagram of Lutero. And if we take no greater liberty than the commentators have taken with DXV, and translate the verses

"Nel quale Un Cinquecento Diece e Cinque,  
Messo di Dio anciderà la fuja."

"In which year, 1515, a Messenger of God shall destroy the Spoiler," the time is marked when Luther had returned from Rome; the measure of his disgust was full, and the sale of indulgences was on the eve of making it overflow in his celebrated *Theses* at Wittenberg.

be owned, that, had he been brought before any ecclesiastical Court, charged as a disseminator of scandal and of schism,—

“Seminatore di scandalo e scisma.” *Inf.* xxviii. 35.

the antipapal satire of the *Commedia* in the verses that we have produced must have condemned him; nor could the author have been overlooked or pardoned by the Inquisition, if the poem had obtained a wide circulation. We know that in his life-time it had been in the hands of his friend Giovanni Virgilio, of Kan Grande, and of a few others, but we know not how cautiously they allowed it to be seen. It spread with wonderful rapidity immediately after his death, and the Church then showed its wisdom in encouraging public lectures to be delivered upon it, in which an antidote might be administered to the evil that was intermingled with the good, and the poison be made innoxious and even medicinal. To the honour of three popes it should be told that they permitted the poem to be dedicated to them un mutilated of a single line: Paul the Third by Vellutello, 1544; Pius the Fourth by Sansovino, 1564; Clement the Twelfth by Venturi, 1732. The censor of a fourth pope, Pius the Sixth, sanctioned the printing of Lombardi's comment at Rome, 1791, the Imprimatur of which contains this liberal sentiment, “E' convenuto di considerare Dante siccome un Classico, e di riguardare alcuni suoi satirici e men giusti dettati piuttosto quai monumenti delle opinioni e de' tempi, che qual materia di scandalo pe' leggitori attuali.”

No Roman Catholic could desire higher authority for the moral tendency and orthodoxy of the poem, considered as a whole.

Dante was perfectly aware of the danger he incurred by “wrestling with spiritual wickedness in high places, and with the rulers of the darkness of this world:” as we gather from the dialogue with his ancestor Cacciaguida (v. p. xl.) in the seventeenth canto of the *Paradiso*, and he could not but dread the charge of heresy; a crime so broadly interpreted in the courts of the Inquisition, that the language of his *Commedia* laid him entirely at their mercy. His open attacks upon the church could not be explained away, and his covert ones are so numerous and offensive, that no dexterity in the use of the double language could blind the Inquisitor from detecting them. He must have felt the importance therefore of leaving no doubt at least of the soundness of his Christian faith, and of his adherence to the church founded by Saint Peter; and with that view may be supposed to have invented the noble fiction of the 24th, 25th and 26th cantos of the *Paradiso*, in which he undergoes a rigid examination on Faith by Saint Peter, on Hope by Saint James, and on Charity by Saint John, and gives such entire satisfaction by his replies to each and all of them, that when he ceases they testify their joy, and unite with Beatrice, the symbol of Christian theology, in hymns of approbation.

The confession on Faith, be it remembered, is represented to take place in Paradise, where all truth is known intuitively. Beatrice thus addresses St. Peter:—

“O luce eterna del gran viro  
 A cui nostro Signor lasciò le chiavi  
 Tenta costui intorno della fede;  
 S’egli ama bene, e bene spera, e crede,  
 Non t’è occulto, perchè ’l viso hai quivi  
 Dove ogni cosa dipinta si vede.” *Par. xxiv. 34.*



And St. Peter's first words to Dante acknowledge him a good Christian,—

“ Di' buon cristiano, fatti manifesto  
Fede che è.” *Par. xxiv. 52.*

“ Good christian, what is faith? Do thou declare.”

Dante replies first in the language of Saint Paul,—

“ Fede e sustanzia di cose sperate,  
Ed argomento delle non parventi :  
E questa pare a me sua quiditate.” *Par. xxiv. 64.*

“ Faith of things hoped is substance, and the proof  
Of things not seen ; and herein doth consist  
Methinks its essence.” *Cary.*

He afterwards proceeds as follows :—

“ O santo padre, o spirito, che vedi  
Ciò che credesti, sì che tu vincesti  
Ver lo sepolcro più giovani piedi,  
Comincia' io : tu vuoi ch'io manifesti  
La forma quì del pronto creder mio,  
Ed anche la cagion di lui chiedesti.  
Ed io rispondo : Credo in uno Iddio  
Solo ed eterno, che tutto 'l Ciel muove,  
Non moto, con amore e con disio :  
Ed a tal creder non ho io pur pruove  
Fisice e metafisice, ma dalmi  
Anche la verità che quinci piove,  
Per Moisè, per profeti, e per salmi,  
Per l' evangelio, e per voi che scriveste  
Poiche l' ardente spirto vi fece almi.  
E credo in tre Persone eterne, e queste  
Credo una essenza sì una e sì trina,  
Che sofferà congiunto sunt et este.  
Della profonda condizion divina  
Ch' io tocco mo, la mente mi sigilla  
Più volte l' evangelica dottrina.

Quest'è il principio, quest'è la favilla  
 Che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace,  
 E, come stella in cielo, in me scintilla.

Come 'l signor ch'ascolta quel che piace,  
 Da indi abbraccia il servo, gratulando  
 Per la novella, tosto ch'e' si tace ;

Così benedicendomi cantando,  
 Tre volte cinse me, sì com'io tacqui,  
 L'apostolico lume, al cui comando  
 Io avea detto ; sì nel dir gli piacqui."

*Par. xxiv. 124.*

" O saintly sire and spirit ! " I began,  
 " Who seest that, which thou didst so believe,  
 As to outstrip feet younger than thine own,  
 Toward the sepulchre ; thy will is here,  
 That I the tenor of my creed unfold ;  
 And thou, the cause of it, hast likewise ask'd.  
 And I reply : I in one God believe ;  
 One sole eternal Godhead, of whose love  
 All heav'n is mov'd, himself unmov'd the while.  
 Nor demonstration physical alone,  
 Or more intelligential and abstruse,  
 Persuades me to this faith : but from that truth  
 It cometh to me rather, which is shed  
 Through Moses ; the rapt Prophets ; and the Psalms ;  
 The Gospel ; and what ye yourselves did write,  
 When ye were gifted of the Holy Ghost.  
 In three eternal Persons I believe ;  
 Essence threefold and one ; mysterious league  
 Of union absolute, which, many a time,  
 The word of gospel lore upon my mind  
 Imprints : and from this germ, this firstling spark,  
 The lively flame dilates ; and like heav'n's star,  
 Doth glitter in me." As the master hears,  
 Well pleas'd, and then enfoldeth in his arms  
 The servant, who hath joyful tidings brought,  
 And having told the errand keeps his peace ;

Thus benediction uttering with song,  
 Soon as my peace I held, compass'd me thrice  
 The apostolic radiance, whose behest  
 Had oped my lips : so well their answer pleased." *Cary.*

We here observe that when the examination on Faith is ended, St. Peter embraces Dante thrice, in token of his satisfaction. This gracious act is again recorded at the beginning of the following Canto, where Dante indulges the delusive hope of a restoration to Florence, and the assuming of the poetic crown, 'nel suo bel San Giovanni.' (Inf. xix. 17.)

" Ritornèrò poeta, e in sul fonte  
 Del mio battesimo prenderò il cappello :  
 Perocchè nella fede che fa conte  
 L' anime a Dio, quiv' entra' io, e poi  
 Pietro per lei sì mi girò la fronte." *Par. xxv. 8.*

" I shall return and take the poet's crown  
 From off the font of my baptismal vow ;  
 For there I enter'd on the faith which makes  
 The soul acceptable to God, and late,  
 For strength in it St. Peter clasp'd my brow."

St. James next addresses Dante in words of encouragement, and examines him on Hope :—

" Leva la testa, e fa che t' assicuri,  
 Che ciò che vien quassù dal mortal mondo,  
 Convien ch' a' nostri raggi si maturi.  
 Poichè per grazia vuol che tu t' affronti,  
 Lo nostro Imperadore, anzi la morte  
 Nell' aula più secreta co' suoi conti.  
 Sì che, veduto il ver di questa corte,  
 La speme, che laggiù bene innamora,  
 In te ed in altrui di ciò conforte :  
 Di' quel che ell' è, e come se ne 'nfiora  
 La mente tua, e di onde a te venne." *Par. xxv. 34.*

" Lift up thy head ; and be thou strong in trust :  
For that, which hither from the mortal world  
Arriveth, must be ripen'd in our beam.

Sith our Liege

Wills of his grace, that thou, or e'er thy death,  
In the most secret council with his lords  
Should be confronted, so that having view'd  
The glories of our court, thou mayst therewith  
Thyself, and all who hear, invigorate  
With hope, that leads to blissful end ; declare,  
What is that hope ? how it doth nourish in thee ?  
And whence thou hadst it ? "

*Cary.*

Before Dante delivers his answer, Beatrice commends him to  
St. James :—

" E quella pia, che guidò le penne  
Delle mie ali a così alto volo,  
Alla risposta così mi prevenne.  
La Chiesa militante alcun figliuolo  
Non ha con più speranza, com' è scritto  
Nel Sol che raggia tutto nostro stuolo :  
Però gli è concesso che d' Egitto  
Vegna in Gerusalemme per vedere,  
Anzi che 'l militar gli sia prescritto."

*Par. xxv. 49.*

" And she whose gentle love  
My soaring pennons in that lofty height  
Had guided, thus preventing me, replied,  
No son hath the Church militant in whom  
Hope is more strong, as traced in letters bright  
That Sun records whose rays our band illumine ;  
Wherefore a passage unto him is given  
From Egypt to Jerusalem, or e'er  
He in his warfare to the end hath striven."

*W. & C.*

Dante commences his reply to St. James with this short definition :—

" Speme, diss' io, è un attender certo  
Della gloria futura, il qual produce  
Grazia divina e precedente merto."

*Par. xxv. 67.*

“ Hope, said I,  
Is of the joy to come a sure expectance,  
The effect of grace divine and merit preceding.” *Cary.*

The confession on Hope being ended, there resound through  
the heavenly choir the words of the seventh psalm, “ *Sperent*  
*in te* ” :—

“ E prima e presso 'l fin d' este parole,  
*Sperent in te*, di sopra noi s' udi,  
A che riposer tutte le carole.” *Par. xxv. 97.*

“ And, as the words were ending, from above,  
They hope in thee !' first heard we cried : whereto  
Answer'd the carols all.” *Cary.*

St. John then addresses Dante and calls for his exposition of  
the Christian virtue Charity :—

“ Comincia dunque, e di ove s' appunta  
L' anima tua.” *Par. xxvi. 7.*

“ Say then,  
Beginning, to what point thy soul aspires.” *Cary.*

Dante replies :—

“ Lo ben che fa contenta questa corte  
Alfa ed omega è di quanta scrittura  
Mi legge amore o lievemente o forte.” *Par. xxvi. 16.*

“ My wishes here  
Are centred : in this palace is the weal,  
That Alpha and Omega is, to all  
The lessons love can read me.” *Cary.*

St. John requires a minuter explication :—

“ E disse : Certo a più angusto vaglio  
Ti conviene schiarar : dicer convienti  
Chi drizzò l' arco tuo a tal bersaglio.” *Par. xxvi. 22.*

“ Behoves thee sift more narrowly thy terms ;  
And say, who level'd at this scope thy bow.” *Cary.*

“ Ed io : Per filosofici argomenti,  
 E per autorità che quinci scende,  
 Cotale amor convien che 'n me s' imprenti.” *Par.* xxvi. 25.

“ Then I : By what philosophy hath taught,  
 And by the revelation flowing hence,  
 This love in me its first impression wrought.” *Wright.*

Dante further explains himself:—

“ Tutti quei morsi  
 Che posson far lo cuor volger a Dio,  
 Alla mia caritate son concorsi.  
 Chè l'essere del mondo, e l'esser mio  
 La morte ch'el sostenne perch'io viva,  
 E quel che spera ogni fedel com'io,  
 Con la predetta conoscenza viva,  
 Tratto m'hanno del mar dell'amor torto,  
 E del dritto m'han posto alla riva.  
 Le frondi onde s'infronda tutto l'orto  
 Dell'ortolano eterno, am'io cotanto  
 Quanto da lui a lor di bene è porto.  
 Sì com'io tacqui, un dolcissimo canto  
 Risonò per lo cielo ; e la mia donna  
 Dicea con gli altri : Santo, Santo, Santo.” *Par.* xxvi. 56.

“ All powerful spurs that turn the heart to God,  
 Confederate to make fast my Charity.  
 The being of the world ; and mine own being ;  
 The death which he endured, that I should live ;  
 And that, which all the faithful hope, as I do ;  
 To the forementioned lively knowledge join'd ;  
 Have from the sea of ill-love saved my bark,  
 And on the coast secured it of the right.  
 I love the leaves whence all the garden blooms  
 Of the eternal Gardener with love  
 Proportion'd to his gifts to them of good.  
 I ended : and therewith a song most sweet  
 Rang through the spheres ; and ' Holy, Holy, Holy,'  
 Accordant with the rest, my lady sang.” *Cary.*

Shortly after this, St. Peter utters the indignant rebuke of his successors in the apostolic see for their intolerable avarice and worldly spirit, denounces the speedy vengeance of heaven, and then delivers his final commands to the poet:—

“ O buon principio,  
A che vil fine convien che tu caschi!  
Ma l' alta provvidenza che con Scipio  
Difese a Roma la gloria del mondo,  
Soccorrà tosto sì com' io concipio:  
E tu, figliuol, che per lo mortal pondo  
Ancor giù tornerai, apri la bocca,  
E non asconder quel ch'io non ascondo.”

*Par.* xvii. 59.

“ O good beginning!  
To what a vile conclusion must thou stoop!  
But the high providence, which did defend,  
Through Scipio, the world's empery for Rome,  
Will not delay its succour: and thou, son,  
Who through thy mortal weight shalt yet again  
Return below, open thy lips, nor hide  
What is by me not hidden.”

*Cary.*

The examination of Dante by the three apostles is so minute, and his answers are so full, that nothing seems wanting to complete the proof of the soundness of his catholic principles.

“ Di quella fede che vince ogni errore.”

*Inf.* iv. 48.

Yet the ingenuity of a celebrated critic can discover in it a motive, and draw an inference, very opposite to ours. It is upon it principally that Ugo Foscolo builds his bold hypothesis; in which there is much that is reasonable and probable, but mingled with what is fanciful and unwarranted, and

which if true would reduce the confession of faith to a mere parody, and cast an indelible stain on the poem of Dante.

The hypothesis is briefly this. That Dante's design in writing the *Commedia* was to hasten a reformation, political and religious; and especially to rouse the Italians to a sense of the necessity of defending religion against the vices of the church; that to increase the influence of his poem, he studied to give it the air of an oracle, and to imitate those popular legends of Visions\*, the belief in which was current and inculcated by the monks; that he wished it to appear that, like St. Paul, he was transported to heaven, to hear divine revelations, and to receive an apostolic commission to preach the truth and to spread it over the earth; that this assumption to heaven was an illusion, perhaps, in which he himself believed; that the examination by St. Peter, if not an illusion, is a device to proclaim his faith in the pretended revelations which called for this great reform; that his profession of hope to St. James shows his confidence in its speedy accomplishment; and that his charity as professed to St. John is not unlimited and extended even to his enemies, but confined to the good, and proportioned to their worthiness; nor is it irreconcilable with punishment of the bad and the gratification of revenge. It is further observed by Foscolo, that the three saints who examine Dante are the three who constitute St. Paul an apostle, and that St. Peter consecrates Dante to his mission by the imposition of hands.

\* See "La Visione del Monaco Alberico," in the *Padua Dante*, 1822, vol. v. "Le Purgatoire de St. Patrick," *Ozanam*, p. 328. "La Vision de St. Paul," *Ozanam*, p. 343.



“ Così benedicendomi cantando,  
Tre volte cinse me\*, sì com'io tacqui,  
L'apostolico lume, al cui comando  
Io avea detto; sì nel dir gli piaqui.” *Par. xxiv. 151.*

The inventor of a system sees the confirmation of it in everything, and Foscolo can even discover the priestly rite of ordination, and the imposition of hands, in the simple words, “so blessing me, the apostolic light clasped me three times.” Extravagant as this fancy is, it were harmless if we were allowed to suppose that the new priest was ordained for the laudable purpose of restoring the purity of the religion of St. Peter; but such is not Foscolo's idea, who represents the conviction of Dante to be, that the priesthood and the church were not separable or different, and that to correct them it was necessary to change them; and that his wish therefore was, not merely to effect reform in the conduct of the Church of Rome, but a change in dogma as well as discipline; and to be the founder of a new school of religion, in which the truths revealed to him in heaven should be reconciled with the doctrines of the ancient philosophers.

These are assertions and extravagances, not to say profanations, that seem to affect the poet's religious and moral character; but must be considered as the offspring of a perverted ingenuity, and to rest on no solid foundation, and only deserving of notice from the celebrity of their author.

\* “ S. Pietro lo cinse della sua luce; non a dargli missione d'apostolo, di Messia, di Maometto novello (cosa da Dante condannata più volte), ma a coronare la schietta fede di lui. E se uomini quali Dante, Tomaso, Agostino, credono i cristiani misteri, bello è stare con loro, ed aver contro sè i filosofi poveretti del secolo andato.”—*Tommasèo.*

Foscolo himself desires us to receive them in the meantime only as an hypothesis. In justice to him, we think it necessary to give some of the above singular sentiments more fully and in his own words:—"Tutto questo per ora si starà qui in via d'ipotesi\*." "Dante riceveva illusioni a sperare dalla religione, alla quale egli s'era costituito riformatore. E non come quelli che poi si divisero dalla Chiesa del Vaticano; ma sì per la missione profetica alla quale di proprio diritto, e senza timore di sacrilegio, si consacrò con rito sacerdotale nell'altissimo de' Cieli. Il Poema Sacro fu dettato per quella missione." (Sez. xl.) "Ei per fede sentiva verità emanate dal Cielo a diffondersi e perpetuarsi sovra tutta la terra; e le riconciliava alla filosofia de' pagani; e insieme sentiva le sue disavventure;

\* Multoque in rebus acerbis  
Acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.'

*Lucretius*, iii. 54.

e vedeva le tristissime condizioni d'Italia originate da' dogmi adulterati per libidine d'oro e di regno da' sacerdoti. Così le facoltà tutte quante dell'anima sua s'esercitavano simultaneamente occupate a proteggere la religione dal "pastorale congiunto alla spada" disperatissima impresa! Pur ci vi s'accinse e vi perseverò finchè visse, illuso da forti speranze che gli eventi non tarderebbero a secondarla, e ch'ei non morrebbe innanzi d'esserne rimeritato." (Sez. xli.)

"Il che si fa manifesto segnatamente da' versi intorno a' quali vo discorrendo, e ch'ei di proposito contornò di parecchi altri,

\* Discorso sul testo del Poema di Dante. Sezione xlviii. p. 90. Ediz. Londra, 1842.

a significare come l'impresa gli fosse stata commessa da Dio.  
Nelle parole Poema Sacro

‘Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra.’

raddenza quant'egli sino dalla prima cantica non cessò mai di dire in più modi—‘Ch'ei percorreva la ‘valle dolorosa’ dell'Inferno e il monte del Purgatorio, a considerare la storia degli errori, delle colpe, e della calamità della Terra; e andava a interrogare la verità della sapienza eterna nel Cielo; a fine di santificare i costumi, le leggi, e la filosofia; e ridurre a concordia il popolo cristiano, sacrificato nelle guerre civili all'ambizione avidissima de Pontefici.’

“Poco innanzi, e non molto dopo quel verso, ei risponde agli Apostoli intorno alla Fede, alla Speranza, e alla Carità. Provocavano risposte a corroborarlo nella fiducia ch'ei possedeva, quanto mai lume di fede, e vigor di speranza, e amore divino, e abborrimento all'iniquità richiedevansi alla vocazione di preservare la religione dagli adulterj della Chiesa Romana.” (Sez. xlii.) “Udita la professione di Fede, San Pietro cantando gli circonda tre volte la fronte di divino splendore.

“Or non rappresenta egli il rito dell'imposizione delle mani, e la consacrazione al ministero Apostolico? Non però Dante voleva dirlo palesamente, almen per allora; e perchè non raffigurava mai le sembianze de' beati ravvolti di fiamma che lo abbagliava, non ha ricordato le mani: ma chi non le vede?

‘Tre volte cinse me, sì com'io tacqui.’ (Sez. XLIII.)

Beatrice richiede un altro Principe glorioso dell'Evangelio di far risuonare la speranza nell'altezza de' Cieli; dove, non essendovi più desiderio, le speranze erano superflue a tutti, da Dante in fuori; dice di lui:



‘ La Chiesa militante alcun figliolo  
 Non ha con più speranza, com’ è scritto  
 Nel Sol che raggia tutto il nostro stuolo ;  
 Però gli è conceduto, che d’ Egitto  
 Vegna in Gerusalemme, per vedere  
 Anzi che il militar gli sia prescitto.’ (Sez. XLIV.)

La divina missione è prescritta al poeta di riformare la religione. Che il figliuolo della Chiesa militante, coraggiosissimo di speranze, fosse chiamato vivente ne’ Cieli per vedere luminosa la verità, innanzi che gli fosse ordinato di diffonderla su la terra—è parafrasi spontanea nella locuzione e nella sintassi; e risponde a ogni parola detta pur dianzi dall’ Apostolo a Dante. ‘ Il nostro Imperadore per grazia vuole che tu anzi la morte, t’ affacci a noi nell’ aula più secreta della sua Corte, sì che veduto il vero, conforti laggiù in te e in altrui la speranza della vittoria del vero.’\* E ne emerge altissima e necessaria la ragione dell’ assunzione di Dante, come San Paolo, ne’ Cieli; di che fè cenno sin dal principio del poema

‘ Io non Paolo sono ;  
 Me degno a ciò, nè io, nè altri crede.’ *Inf.* ii. 32.

Forse in altro secolo, forse anche nel suo, sotto accidenti alquanto diversi.—Dante avrebbe fondato nuova scuola di religione in Europa; ed ei v’ aspirava, non foss’ altro in Italia. Frattanto la ragione sufficiente della conferenza di Dante nell’ aula più secreta del Cielo, venne dissimulata dai commentatori forse per giusta prudenza. La consacrazione alla legazione evangelica restò inosservata; le parole cominciarono a frantendersi di necessità; la sintassi fu contorta a connetterle; e le chiose d’ allora in qua cospirarono a perpetuare questa interpretazione volgata—La Chiesa militante non ha alcun figliuolo

\* *Par.* xxv. 40–45.

che più de Dante corredato sia di una vera Cristiana Speranza —per questo appunto è a lui concesso, che dall' infido Egitto del mondo, egli venga a vedere coi propri occhi questa celeste Gerusalemme, prima che abbia fine la di lui mortal vita, la quale, come è detto al V. 1. del cap. VII. di Giobe, per i buoni e probi Fedeli è una continua milizia. (Sez. xlv.)

“ Kan della Scala era già vittorioso e sembrava prossimo a verificare i presagj

‘ Per lui fia trasmutata molta gente,

Cambiando condizion ricchi e mendici.’ *Par.* xvii. 89.

Parecchi altri simili vaticinj furono scritti da Dante; parte per la troppa fiducia di mutazioni imminenti, che inganna più gli esuli che gli altri uomini: e parte per la speranza, comune anche a' savj, di lunga vita; e più cara a chiunque essendo capace di lunga ira, ma non sino al grado profondissimo del disprezzo, si lusinga di sopravvivere alla punizione di chi l' offese. Questa voluttà degli Dei è promessa al poeta da' Santi; ed ei la santifica nella sua professione di Carità a' tre Principi degli Apostoli ‘ Doversi amare di grado in grado più sempre le creature che men si dilungano dalla perfezione di Dio, Sommo Bene e Primo Amore dell' Universo’\*—e ne sgorga innegabile la dottrina—che le creature quanto più si dilungano dalla perfezione, e da Dio, sono esecrabili e destinate dalla giustizia divina all' Inferno. (Sez. xlix.)

“ Il Gravina, il Merian, ed altri hanno osservato la mitologia nella divina commedia. Pur quando avrò da toccare le allegorie, uscirà, spero, di dubbio che nella mente di Dante la favola era santificata per un sistema occulto insieme, e perpetuo, e concatenato al pari delle Cantiche de' canti, e delle

\* *Par.* xxvi. 64–65.

rime della commedia ; e tendente ad adempiere i fini della milizia Apostolica. Gli versi che seguono la consecrazione di Dante congiungono il rito pagano dell'alloro, al battesimo ; e le immagini di Virgilio, alle sentenze di San Paolo—

Se mai continga che il poema sacro  
Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,  
Sì che mi ha fatto per più anni maero,

Vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra  
Del bello ovile, ov' io dormii agnello,  
Nimico a' lupi che gli danno guerra ;

Con altra voce omai, con altro vello,  
Ritornèrò poeta, e in sul fonte  
Del mio battesimo prenderò il cappello.

*Par. xxv. 1.*

If e'er the sacred poem, that hath made  
Both heav'n and earth copartners in its toil,  
And with lean abstinence, through many a year,  
Faded my brow, be destin'd to prevail  
Over the cruelty, which bars me forth  
Of the fair sheep-fold, where, a sleeping lamb,  
The wolves set on and fain had worried me ;  
With other voice, and fleece of other grain,  
I shall forthwith return ; and, standing up  
At my baptismal font, shall claim the wreath  
Due to the poet's temples : for I there  
First enter'd on the faith, which maketh souls  
Acceptable to God : and, for its sake,  
Saint Peter had encircled thus my brow.

*Cury.*

Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit,  
Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas—  
Et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam—  
Ipse caput tonsæ foliis ornatus olivæ.

*Georg. iii. 10.*

I first into my native land shall bring  
The muses with me from the Aonian Mount ;  
A marble temple on the plain shall rise,  
And there my brow with olive be adorn'd.

“ ‘ Qui certat in agone non coronabitur, nisi legitime certaverit\*.’ Parmi dunque manifesto che Dante s’aggiudicò la corona, aspettandola non dall’applauso, nè dal perdono de’ Fiorentini, nè dal giudizio d’uomo veruno, bensì dal decreto divino per la legittima autorità della sua missione, e il merito d’avere militato contro la Chiesa puttanezzante†. La denunziò settanta e più canti addietro, in nome d’uno de’ tre Apostoli che lo animarono ad affrontarla; ed erano stati per l’appunto que’ tre che avevano assentito l’Apostolato a San Paolo: ‘ Jacobus, et Cephas, et Joannes, qui videbantur columnæ esse, dextras dederunt mihi ‡.’ Tutto questo per ora si starà qui in via d’ipotesi.” (Sez. xlviii.)

“ Il Purgatorio, non mostrandosi avviluppata nelle idee incomprendibili dell’ eternità, crebbe più popolare dell’ altre due, l’ Inferno e il Paradiso. Dante fece magico uso di tutte: se non che al suo libro restò solamente il carattere di poesia; e mosse le fantasie de’ mortali,

‘ Non di più colpo che soave vento.’ *Purg.* xxviii. 9.

Che ov’ anche, protetti dalle vittorie ch’ ei si sperava dell’ armi Imperiali, i pochi Intelletti Sani avessero

‘ Rotto il velame degli versi strani,’

e additate liberamente le riforme alla religione, senza nondimeno poter additare ad un ora evidenti gli indizj della divina rivelazione nel libro, il poeta non avrebbe esercitato nè pur allora su gli uomini l’ autorità di profeta. Di che ho toccato più sopra; e quando avrò a risalire all’ origine vera della visione di Dante, atterrò la promessa e la sua consacra-

\* *Timoth. secund. ii. 5.*

† *Inf. xix. 106, 108.*

‡ *Galat. ii. 9.*



zione nel Paradiso al ministero Apostolico lasciata da me per ipotesi, avrà lume e sostanza di verità.”—(Sez. cxxi.)

Foscolo was prevented by death from giving the promised corroboration of his extraordinary hypothesis, which must be considered a most mistaken one that has obtained notoriety from its originality and the celebrity of the author. Il Maggi\* has condemned it shortly but severely; and Zinelli† has observed with truth, that if Dante could have believed that he was a second St. Paul, and honoured with this apostolic mission, and that the fictions of his *Paradiso* were realities and divine revelations, his mind must undoubtedly have been deranged; and that the critic who could suppose such a delusion possible of the author of the *Commedia*, and could reason upon it as certain, can be considered in that particular no better than insane. As to the new school of religion, which was to combine philosophy and Christianity, we may refer its existence entirely to the unsettled and unhappy state of Foscolo's religious principles, which his friend Silvio Pellico has recently recorded in stanzas to his memory:—

“ Ugo conobbi, e qual fratel l' amai,  
Chè l' alma avea per me piena d' amore :  
Dolcissimi al suo fianco anni passai,  
E ad alti sensi ei m' elevava il core.  
Scender nol vidi ad artifizi mai,  
E viltà gli mettea cruccio ed orrore :  
Vate era sommo, ed avea cinto l' armi,  
E alteri come il brando eran suoi carmi.

---

\* Convito. Padova, 1827. Prefazione.

† Lo Spirito Religioso di Dante. Venezia, 1839.



“ Ma, sventura, sventura! Uom così degno  
D’ amar colla sua grand’ anima Iddio,  
In fresca età l’ ardimentoso ingegno  
Ad infelici dubitanze aprio :  
Chè di natura l’ ammirabil regno  
Opra di cicche sorti or gli apparìo,  
Or de’ mondi il Signor gli tralucea,  
Ma incurante d’ umani atti il credea\*.”

We have an instance in these interpretations of Foscolo, and in many of Professor Rossetti, and of others, of the unavoidable evil attending the conveyance of doctrines in allegory, gergo, and a studied ambiguity of language ; an evil, which has been often exemplified in comments on a vision of infinitely more importance than Dante’s. The interpretation of symbols must be dependent on the views and ingenuity of the expounder, and the meaning may be plausibly twisted to support even contradictory theories. “ A rincalzo di ciò leggansi le sottoposte parole, tratte dalla conclusione del Decamerone.” “ Quali libri, quali parole, quali lettere, son più sante, più degne, più reverende che quelle della divina scrittura ? E sì sono egli stati assai che, quelle perversamente intendendo, se e altrui a perdizione hanno tratto†.” Allegory is like a mirror of irregular surface ; it can reflect the object faithfully in one point of view, and can distort it in various ways at the pleasure of the holder.

“ Vie più che ’ndarno da riva si parte,  
Perchè non torna tal qual ei si muove  
Chi pesca per lo vero e non ha l’ arte :

---

\* Poesie Inedite di Silvio Pellico. Parigi, 1837, p. 130.

† Biagioli. Dante, vol. iii. p. 226.

“ E di ciò sono al mondo aperte pruove  
 Parmenide, Melisso, e Brioso e molti,  
 Li quali andavan e non sapean dove ;

“ Sî fe’ Sabellio, ed Arrio, e quegli stolti  
 Che furon come spade alle scritture  
 In render torti li diritti volti.” *Par. xiii. 121.*

“ Much more than vainly doth he loose from shore,  
 Since he returns not such as he set forth,  
 Who fishes for the truth and wanteth skill.  
 And open proofs of this unto the world  
 Have been afforded in Parmenides,  
 Melissus, Bryso, and the crowd beside,  
 Who journey’d on, and knew not whither ; so did  
 Sabellius, Arius, and the other fools,  
 Who, like to scymitars, reflected back  
 The Scripture-image by distortion marr’d.” *Cary.*

Let the *Commedia* be studied ingenuously, free from the prejudice of system, and bearing in mind that the author was not only a Christian philosopher, but a member of the Church of Rome, and there will be little danger of being misled by the sophistry of false guides, who distort its meaning to make its religious sentiments conformable to their own.

“ Drizza—ver lei l’ agute luci  
 Dell’ intelletto, e fieti manifesto  
 L’ error de’ ciechi che si fanno duci.” *Purg. xviii. 16.*

“ Thither direct thine intellectual sight  
 With keenness, and their error will appear,  
 Who being blind presume to be your guides.”

“ Ancor dirò, perchè tu veggi pura  
 La verità, che laggiù si confonde  
 Equivocando in sì fatta lettura.” *Par. xxix. 73.*

• • • • •

" Si che laggiù non dormendo si sogna,  
 Credendo e non credendo dicer vero ;  
 Ma nell' uno è più colpa e più vergogna.  
 Voi non andate giù per un sentiero,  
 Filosofando, tanto vi trasporta  
 L' amor dell' apparenza e 'l suo pensiero.  
 Ed ancor questo quassù si comporta  
 Con men disdegno, che quando è posposta  
 La divina Scrittura, o quando è torta." *Par. xxix. 82.*

" Therefore 't is well thou take from me the truth,  
 Pure and without disguise ; which they below,  
 Equivocating, darken and perplex.

\* \* \* \* \*

So that men, thus at variance with the truth,  
 Dream, though their eyes be open ; reckless some  
 Of error ; others well aware they err,  
 To whom more guilt and shame are justly due.  
 Each the known track of sage philosophy  
 Deserts, and has a bye-way of his own ;  
 So much the restless eagerness to shine,  
 And love of singularity, prevail.  
 Yet this, offensive as it is, provokes  
 Heaven's anger less, than when the book of God  
 Is forced to yield to man's authority,  
 Or from its straightness warp'd."

*Cary.*

There are some commentators who err in maintaining the orthodoxy of Dante in every the minutest particular. There are others, disciples of Foscolo's New School of Religion, who see in every word of the *Commedia* a double sense and a proof of insincerity and hypocrisy, which, if true, would make the author's principles worse than doubtful, and render the poem hateful and mischievous. But the plain and obvious sense of the *Commedia* is religious and sound, and is not to be borne down by a possible and opposite sense, derived only from a



subtile and ingenious interpretation of dark allegories and ambiguous phraseology : if a similar double language be constructed, and the same test and reasoning be applied to the *Paradise Lost*, the argument might be made just as plausible, and the conclusions as strong against its moral tendency and the principles of Milton. Our own conviction is, that Dante was a sound but liberal Catholic, and sincerely devoted to the constitution of the Church of Rome, but not its slave.

Zinelli will not even admit that the exhibition of Pope Anastasius the Second (*Inf.* xi.), under eternal punishment for heresy, amounts to a denial of the dogma of papal infallibility. He somewhat jesuitically excuses it thus :—"Dante, seguendo manifestamente l'autorità di Martino Polono, e di Graziano notò in Anastasio la connivenza alla eresia, non l'eresia. Non mai nè Martino Polono, nè Graziano, nè Dante si sognarono che Anastasio insegnasse dalla cattedra di Pietro dogmaticamente l'errore contro la Fede. Or ciò solo contrasta alla Pontificia infallibilità, e non l'errore contro la Fede del Pontefice, come privata persona. E chi bramasse veder egregiamente trattata una tal distinzione, può leggere il capo 24 del Trattato sopra la infallibilità Pontificia, Opera di D. Mauro Cappellari, Monaco Camaldolese, ora Gregorio XVI. Sommo Pontefice felicemente regnante. Cade adunque da se la fatta obbiezione, e Anastasio può starsi nell' Inferno di Dante tale e quale, restando Dante cattolico."

To suppose that Dante could have subscribed to the Jesuits' acceptation of the term is impossible. In their disputes with the Jansenists they make the monstrous assertion that J. C. hath given to all Popes, when they shall speak *ex cathedra*,

the same infallibility which he had, both in matters of right and fact. Dante would probably understand Infallibility as rational Catholics do, as an acknowledgment that much greater reverence is due to decrees of the church than to those of any civil authority, and that they should be unquestioned and implicitly submitted to; but that in being human they must necessarily be fallible, and that therefore, in extreme cases of error, they may undergo revision, and even be reversed by a General Council\*; but that, in most cases, when erroneous, it is wiser to allow them to be neglected and quietly to expire than formally to abrogate them†.

Dante exposes the fallibility of a Pope in another instance, where Zinelli cannot plead, as in the case of Anastasius, that the action is to be judged as that of a mere individual, for here it is the employment of the power of the keys, in all its plenitude, for the purpose of deceiving and seducing to the commission of crime. The scandal is exorbitant, and can hardly be excused by any good Catholic, though he must admire the excellent moral that is made to flow from it, and the lesson it conveys in rightly understanding and estimating absolutions and plenary indulgences.

The Pope is Boniface the Eighth, and the person whom he tempts to sin is Guido da Montefeltro, a celebrated general, who, after much vicissitude of fortune, finally retired from the world, and in 1297 took the vows of a Franciscan friar. Dante encounters his spirit, enveloped in a flame of fire, in

\* As was decided at the Council of Constance, 1414.

† As in the Papal decisions against the Copernican system.



the gulph of evil counsellors, and thus addresses him, and prevails on him to relate his story:—

“Ora chi se’ ti priego che ne conte,” &c. *Inf.* xxvii. 55.

Dante—“And who art thou, I prythee, tell me now ;  
 Be not less gentle than the rest ;—so may  
 Thy name on earth uphold a lofty brow.”  
 Then, when in its peculiar way had roar’d  
 The fire awhile, its top was seen to play  
 This way and that ;—anon a blast it pour’d.  
 Guido da Montefeltro —“If I believed my answer would be made  
 To one who ever could the world regain,  
 This flame should rest in peace, nor more be sway’d ;  
 But since no living soul, if true it be  
 What I have heard, e’er left this gulph of pain,—  
 Fearless of infamy, I answer thee.  
 A soldier once—I next around me tied  
 St. Francis’ cord, in hopes to purge my crime ;  
 And truly had those hopes been verified,  
 But that the mighty Priest, whom evil take,  
 Allured me to my sins a second time ;  
 And how, and why, I will relation make.  
 While flesh and bone encompass’d me around,  
 (My mother’s gift,) my deeds resembled less  
 The lion than the fox :—such skill profound  
 In stratagems I show’d, and play’d my game  
 With so much wily craft and subtleness,  
 The world’s far limits sounded with my fame.  
 But when I saw that time of life begin,  
 When every man, the port approaching, ought  
 To coil the ropes and take the canvass in ;—  
 What first had pleased me, irksome seem’d to grow ;  
 And to repentance and confession brought,  
 I had been blest ;—alas, how wretched now !  
 The haughty prince of modern Pharisees\*,

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\* Boniface VIII.

Who near the Lateran his fierce warfare waged\*,  
 And not with Moors or Jewish enemies,  
 (For all were Christians whom his vengeful hand  
 Opposed; and none had Acre's walls besieged,  
 Or e'er had traffick'd in the Sultan's land†,)  
 Regarded not his own exalted state  
 And holy office, nor my sacred cord,  
 Which should the form it girds attenuate:—  
 But, as of old, to cure his leprosy,  
 Silvester was by Constantine implored;—  
 So in a more commanding tone did he  
 Bid me to cure the fever of his pride:  
 Counsel he ask'd, but as he seem'd to jest,  
 To his demand an answer I denied.  
 Again he said to me: 'Be not afraid—  
 I do absolve thee; tell the means, how best  
 May Pellestrino in the dust be laid‡.  
 Heaven, as thou know'st, I have the power at will  
 To lock or unlock; hence the keys are twain,  
 Which erst my predecessor prized so ill.'  
 Then had his cogent arguments full sway,  
 When silence could procure me little gain;  
 And I: 'O Father, since you wash away  
 The sin which now it needs I must commit;—  
 Large be your promise—your performance slack§—  
 Thus will you triumph in your lofty seat.'  
 When I was dead,—to bear my soul away  
 Saint Francis came; but lo! a Demon black  
 Exclaim'd: 'Forbear—nor take my lawful prey;  
 Down must he go to where my servants are,

---

\* Waged with the Colonna family.

† Not renegades who fought for the Sultan, or assisted him for payment with supplies.

‡ A fortress belonging to the Colonna family.

§ "Get Pellestrino and the Cardinals Colonna into your power by fair promises, then destroy both." Which was done. See Landino's Comment.



Because he has of fraud the adviser been,  
 Since which, my hand hath held him by the hair.  
 Nought but repentance ever can absolve;—  
 But to repent, and yet incline to sin,  
 A contradiction would in terms involve.  
 Oh with what anguish from him did I bound,  
 When seizing me, he said, 'Perhaps you thought  
 I was not a logician so profound\*!'"

*Wright.*

Upon this indecorous and unsparing lampoon, in which Franciscans and Syrian renegades come in for their share of the poet's satire, Foscolo observes:—"Che il vecchio celebrato per lunga esperienza 'd' accorgimenti e di coperte vie' cadesse a occhi aperti nello stratagemma teologico; non trovo testimonianza se non questa una. Al Muratori non rincresceva d' accoglierla; ma la rafferma solamente con la parafrasi latina di Benvenuto da Imola; e la traduce lunga com' è, per concludere: 'Non c'è obbligazione di credere questo fatto a Dante, persona troppo ghibellina, e che taglia da per tutto i panni addosso a Papa Bonifacio, tuttochè ancora Giovanni Villani ci descriva questo Pontefice per uomo di larga coscienza†.'"

Dante might perhaps approve the doctrine of Papal infallibility as we do the maxim that "the Sovereign can do no wrong," from its tendency to preserve a habit of respect, which is peculiarly necessary in a religion that admits not private judgment in matters of faith, and constitutes the Pope a tribunal for the final decision of all Scriptural con-

\* Voltaire's wicked and humorous version of this story, "Je m'appelais le Comte de Guidon," &c., is known to every one.

† *Annali*, an. 1299.



troversies;—a measure conducive to peace, the great object of all government, and useful at least in silencing theological disputes among ministers of the same Church. The submission of private judgment in religion is enforced in many passages of the *Commedia*, of which it may not be uninteresting to produce some examples; but a few preliminary observations seem desirable. In Dante's journey through the spiritual worlds there is a change of hierophants, as was practised in the Eleusinian mysteries\*. Virgil, the representative of heathen philosophy, is his guide through the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, as far as the terrestrial paradise, where, on the appearance of Beatrice, he vanishes. Beatrice, the symbol of Christian philosophy, and more especially of theology, then becomes his guide, and conducts him through the *Paradiso* to the Empyreum; there vanishes, having first commended him to St. Bernard, the symbol of contemplation, who finally brings him to the accomplishment of all his desire,

\* Professor Rossetti is the first commentator who has shown how intimately acquainted Dante must have been with all that had been handed down by authors respecting the ceremonial of initiation in the ancient mysteries, and how exact a representation of it is given in the *Commedia*, in the progress of Dante himself through the realms of spirits, between the opening of the *Inferno* and the last lines of the *Paradiso*, between his being lost in the

“ ——— Selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,  
Che nel pensier rinnova la paura,” *Inf.* i. 5.

and his being permitted to know the ineffable bliss of the beatific vision, when

“ ——— la sua mente fu percossa  
Da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne.” *Par.* xxxiii. 140.



by the sight of the highest of mysteries and of the Beatific Vision.

“ All’ alta fantasia qui mancò possa.” *Par. xxxiii. 142.*

“ The glorious Vision here my powers o’ercame\*.” *Wright.*

When Dante and Virgil are on the terrace of the mountain of Purgatory, (Dove tempo per tempo si ristora—*Purg. xxiii. 84.*) where those who have been negligent in repenting are doomed to linger, as long as the interval between their sin and their repentance, before their purification can begin, unless aided by the prayers of the good, a Spirit thus addresses Dante :—

“ O frate, l’andar su che porta ?  
 Che non mi lascerebbe ire a’ martiri  
 L’angel di Dio che siede ’n su la porta :  
 Prima convien che tanto ’l ciel m’aggiri  
 Di fuor da essa, quant’io feci in vita,†  
 Perchè ’ndugiai al fin li buon’ sospiri,  
 Se orazione in prima non m’aita  
 Che surga su di cuor che ’n grazia viva :  
 L’altra che val, che ’n Ciel non è udita ?” *Purg. iv. 127.*

“ O brother, what avails the steep to climb ?”  
 He said ; “ for know, God’s angel at the gate  
 Would not admit me ere the appointed time.  
 Whirl’d must I be without these boundaries  
 Long as I dwelt on earth ;—and this my fate—

---

\* “ Here failed the power of imprinting on my memory the image of the lofty objects I had seen.”—*Lombardi.* “ We can but confess the glories of the Lord by dazzled eyes, and a stammering tongue, and a heart overcharged with the miracles of His Infinity.”—*Jeremy Taylor. The Miracles of the Divine Mercy.*

† Cioè, quanto indugiai in vita gli buoni sospiri, *Lombardi.*  
 Ho da aspettar tanti anni quanti ne vissi, *Venturi.*

Since I till death delay'd repentant sighs—  
 Unless by prayer a speedier aid be given  
 From hearts which grace divine hath visited :  
 What other prayer avails—unheard in Heaven ?" *Wright.*

Doubts afterwards arise in Dante's mind as to the efficacy of prayer, and he recalls to Virgil the verse of the sixth *Æneid*, (l. 376.)

" Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando."  
 " Hope not the Gods' decrees will bend to prayer."

A dialogue ensues, in which Virgil refers Dante for the solution of all such questions to Beatrice, that is, to theology ; to the decisions of the church ; to the Pope, in fact, as its infallible oracle :—

" Veramente a così alto sospetto  
 Non ti fermar, se quella nol ti dice  
 Che lume fia tra 'l vero e lo 'ntelletto." *Purg. vi. 43.*

The dialogue is as follows :—

" Come libero fui da tutte quante." *Purg. vi. 25.*

" When I from all these spirits had been freed,  
 Who pray'd they might obtain the prayers of man,  
 Their progress to a blessed state to speed ;  
 ' O thou, my light ! thy text, it seems, hath given  
 Denial to the doctrine,' I began,  
 ' That prayers can alter the decrees of Heaven :  
 Yet such the faith these spirits entertain.  
 Will all their hopes then prove of no avail ?  
 Or is thy writing not to me made plain ?'  
 ' Plain is my writing,' straightway he rejoin'd,  
 ' Nor will their cherish'd expectations fail,  
 If thou consider with a thoughtful mind :  
 For Judgment stoops not from his lofty seat,  
 Though love's warm flame, in one short moment, may  
 That ransom work these should themselves complete.

Moreover, where I wrote that maxim—there  
 No crime by praying could be wash'd away,  
 Since from the Almighty was diajoin'd their prayer.  
 But on my answer do not thou rely,  
 Unless confirm'd by her who is the light  
 That shines between the truth and mental eye.  
 Know'st thou my meaning? Beatrice I mean;—  
 She, blest and joyous, on the verdant height  
 Of this fair mountain shall by thee be seen." " *Wright.*

When Virgil is conducting Dante from the terrace where the  
 soul is purified of envy, he says to him

" Per quanto si dice più li *nostro*  
 Tanto possiede più di ben ciascuno,  
 E più di caritate arde in quel chiostro." *Purg. xv. 55.*

" In Heaven, by how much more they call it *ours*,  
 So much propriety of each in good  
 Increases more, and heighten'd charity  
 Wraps that fair cloister in a brighter flame." *Cary.*

The doctrine perplexes Dante, and he states his difficulties to  
 Virgil:—

" Io son d'esser contento più digiuno,  
 Diss' io, che se mi fosse pria taciuto;  
 E più di dubbio nella mente aduno.  
 Com'esser puote, ch'un ben distributo  
 I più possessor' faccia più ricchi  
 Di sè, che se da pochi è posseduto?" *Purg. xv. 58.*

" 'Now lack I satisfaction more,' said I,  
 'Than if thou hadst been silent at the first;  
 And doubt more gathers on my labouring thought.  
 How can it chance, that good distributed,  
 The many, that possess it, makes more rich,  
 Than if 't were shared by few?' " *Cary.*

Virgil gives the following explanation, and concludes with re-  
 ferring Dante for full satisfaction to Beatrice:—

" Ed egli a me : Perocchè tu rificchi."

*Purg.* xv. 64.

" He answering thus :

' Thy mind, reverting still to things of earth,  
Strikes darkness from true light. The highest good  
Unlimited, ineffable, doth so speed  
To love, as beam to lucid body darts,  
Giving as much of ardour as it finds.  
The sempiternal effluence streams abroad,  
Spreading, wherever charity extends ;  
So that the more aspirants to that bliss  
Are multiplied, more good is there to love,  
And more is loved ; as mirrors, that reflect  
Each unto other, propagated light.  
If these my words avail not to allay  
Thy thirsting, Beatrice thou shalt see,  
Who of this want, and of all else thou hast,  
Shall rid thee to the full. ' "

*Cary.*

When Virgil and Dante are on the terrace where those whose sin is lukewarmness in divine love are punished and purified, together with those who have lived moody and discontented, insensible to the bounty and beauties of nature,

" Tristi——Nell' aere dolce che dal sol s' allegra ;"

*Inf.* vii. 121.

" Sad——In the sweet air made gladsome by the sun ;"

*Cary.*

the questions of Love, Necessity, and Free-will are discussed, and Virgil thus replies to doubts that are started by Dante :—

" Ed egli a me : Quanto ragion quì vede,  
Dir ti poss' io : da indi in là t' aspetta  
Pure a Beatrice, ch' è opra di fede.

\* \* \* \* \*

Color che ragionando andaro al fondo  
S' accorser d' esta innata libertate ;  
Però moralità lasciaro al mondo.



Onde, poniam che di necessitate  
 Surga ogni amor che dentro a voi s' accende;  
 Di ritenerlo è in voi la potestate.  
 La nobile virtù Beatrice intende  
 Per lo libero arbitrio, e però guarda  
 Che l' abbi a mente s' a parlar ten prende."

*Purg.* xviii. 46-75.

"As far as reason," he replied, "can reach,  
 I may direct thee; but beyond its ken  
 'Tis faith that works, and Beatrice must teach.

\* \* \* \* \*

Those who the matter fully sifted, knew  
 This innate liberty, and felt its force;  
 Whence moral codes for after times they drew.  
 Hence lay we down, that from necessity  
 Each love that springs in you derives its source;  
 But in yourselves the powers to check it lie.  
 Free-will is term'd 'the noble faculty'  
 By Beatrice;—if then 't is named by her,  
 Remember to bear this in memory."

*Wright.*

When Dante is with Beatrice in the Heaven of the Moon,  
 the subject of Free-will is again discussed, and Beatrice says  
 to him,—

"Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza  
 Fesse creando, e alla sua bontate  
 Più conformato, e quel ch' ei più apprezza,  
 Fu della volontà la libertate,  
 Di che le creature intelligenti  
 E tutte e sole furo e son dotate."

*Par.* v. 19.

"Supreme of gifts, which God, creating, gave  
 Of his free bounty, sign most evident  
 Of goodness, and in his account most prized,  
 Was liberty of will; the boon, wherewith  
 All intellectual creatures, and them sole,  
 He hath endow'd."

*Cary.*

To illustrate the profound question of Liberty and Necessity, and to show that Free-will is consistent with the Prescience of the Deity,

“ A cui tutti li tempi son presenti,” *Par. xvii. 17.*

Dante supposes the following lines to be delivered by the spirit of Cacciaguida :—

“ La contingenza, che fuor del quaderno  
Della vostra materia non si stende,  
Tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno.  
Necessità però quindi non prende,  
Se non come dal viso in che si specchia  
Nave che per corrente giù discende.” *Par. xvii. 37.*

“ Contingency, whose verge extendeth not  
Beyond the book of your material world,  
Is all depicted in the eternal sight ;  
But hence deriveth not necessity,  
More than the vessel, hurried down the flood,  
Is driven by the eye that looks on it.” *Cury.*

These extracts are sufficient to show the importance given to the theological character of Beatrice, and to the doctrine, that reason and human wisdom (personified in Virgil) teach us to defer our judgment with humility to that of the Church, in all cases where doubts arise, and revelation is silent or obscure ;—a doctrine, that to a certain extent must be recognized, and inculcated by every Protestant Church ; but which undoubtedly has been carried too far and much abused by the practice of the church of Rome. The presumption of man in ever daring to question the motives and justice of Providence, and in hesitating to submit instantly where Scripture is precise, however incomprehensible, is condemned in many passages of the *Commedia*, in no one more forcibly and beautifully

than where Dante's thoughts are read in the heaven of the Just, when he was reflecting on the impossibility of salvation without Christian faith, and on the consequent future state and hapless doom

" Of the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind,  
Whose soul proud science never taught to stray."

Dante is in the sphere of Jupiter, and addresses the spiritual Eagle, who, knowing all his doubting thoughts, relates them to him, and reproves them.

" *Dante*.—Solvete mi, spirando, il gran digiuno  
Che longamente m' ha tenuto in fame,  
Non trovandoli in terra cibo alcuno." *Par. xix. 25.*

" O speak, and let the hunger be appeased,  
That with great craving long hath held my soul,  
Finding no food on earth." *Cary.*

" *L' Aquila*.—Nella giustizia sempiterna  
La vista che riceve il vostro mondo,  
Com' occhio per lo mare entro s' interna :  
Che, benchè dalla proda veggia il fondo,  
In pelago nol vede : e nondimeno  
Egli è, ma celal lui l' esser profondo. *Par. xix. 58.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Tu dicevi : Un uom nasce alla riva  
Dell' Indo, e quivi non è chi ragioni  
Di Cristo, nè chi legga, nè chi scriva :  
E tutti suoi voleri ed atti buoni  
Sono, quanto ragione umana vede,  
Senza peccato in vita od in sermoni :  
Muore non battezzato e senza fede ;  
Ov' è questa giustizia che 'l condanna ?  
Ov' è la colpa sua sed ei non crede ?  
Or tu chi se' che vuoi sedere a scranna



O mortal race, for reasons,—but believe,  
And be contented ; for had all been seen,  
No need there was for Mary to conceive.” *Wright.*

“ Quel uno e due e tre che sempre vive,  
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,  
Non circoscritto e tutto circonscrive.” *Par. xiv. 28.*

“ Him who lives ever and for ever reigns  
In mystic union of the Three in One,  
Uncircumscribed, and circumscribing all.” *Cary.*

In these and many of the foregoing extracts, truths are taught that are not peculiar to Romanism, but are subscribed to by all the three great Protestant Churches. They are not unimportant however to our argument, being evidence of the religious and catholic spirit of the writings of Dante, which it is the fashion of the school of Foscolo, and of La Giovine Italia, to deny, and to see and admire in him only the antipapist and political reformer. The doctrine, which here seems to be admitted, that the doom is unalterably sealed of all such as are in the supposed predicament of the Indian (*Par. xix. 71.*) invites us to remark further on this part of the theology of the *Commedia*.

The terms, on which admission to the christian Paradise may be obtained, are thus laid down :—

“ A questo regno,  
Non salì mai chi non credette in Cristo  
Nè pria nè poi che’l si chiavasse al legno.  
Ma vedi, molti gridan Cristo, Cristo,  
Che saranno in giudizio assai men prope  
A lui che tal che non conobbe Cristo.” *Par. xix. 103.*

“ None ever hath ascended to this realm,  
Who hath not a believer been in Christ,  
Either before or after the blest limbs  
Were nail’d upon the cross. But lo ! of those



Who call ' Christ, Christ,' there shall be many found,  
 In judgment, further off from him by far,  
 Than such to whom his name was never known."

*Cary.*

Since therefore we are shown but three regions appointed for the spirits of the dead, and they who have not believed in the coming Messiah, "*Cristo venturo*," or in the Messiah already come, "*Cristo venuto*," are thus expressly excluded from the Paradiso, and consequently from the Purgatorio which ultimately conducts to it, it follows that they are inevitably condemned to the Inferno, to those

" Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
 And rest can never dwell! hope never comes,  
 That comes to all!"

Over the terrific entrance of which Inferno are inscribed the memorable words—

" Per me si va nella città dolente :  
 Per me si va nell' eterno dolore :  
 Per me si va tra la perduta gente.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate." *Inf.* iii. 1.  
 " Through me ye pass into the world of woe :  
 Through me ye pass to sorrow without end :  
 Through me ye pass among the people lost.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 All hope abandon ye who enter here."

The severity of this decree is softened in various ways in the *Commedia*: by the supposition of a Limbo; by the doctrine of Predestination, Election, and Grace; and by the efficacy of prayer.

When passing through the *Limbo dell' Inferno*, Virgil points

out to Dante the spirits of good men who lived both before  
and after the coming of the Saviour, and says of them

“ Non adorar’ debitamente Iddio :  
E di questi cotai son io medesimo.  
Per tai difetti, e non per altro rio,  
Semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi,  
Che senza speme vivemo in desio.” *Inf. iv. 38.*

“ These served not God aright,  
And among such am I. For this defect,  
And for no other evil we are lost,  
Afflicted only so far that we live  
Desiring without hope.” *Cary.*

Virgil adds

“ Io era nuovo in questo stato  
Quando ci vidi venire un possente \*  
Con segno di vittoria incoronato.  
Trasseci l’ombra del primo parente,  
D’ Abel suo figlio, e quella di Noè,  
Di Moisè legista e ubbidiente :  
Abraam patriarca, e David re :  
Israele col padre e co’ suoi nati,  
E con Rachele per cui tanto fe’ :  
Ed altri molti, e feceli beati :  
E vo’ che sappi che dinanzi ad essi,  
Spiriti umani non eran salvati.” *Inf. iv. 52.*

“ I was new to that estate,  
When I beheld a puissant one arrive  
Amongst us, with victorious trophy crown’d.  
He forth the shade of our first parent drew,  
Abel his child, and Noah righteous man,  
Of Moses lawgiver for faith approved,  
Of Patriarch Abraham, and David king,

---

\* Lombardi observes that in no one place of the *Inferno* does Dante use the name of Christ, as if in such a place it were a profanation.



Israel with his sire and with his sons,  
 Nor without Rachel whom so hard he won,  
 And others many more, whom he to bliss  
 Exalted. Before these, be thou assured,  
 No spirit of human kind was ever saved." *Cary.*

Dante enumerates many whom he saw there, persons who had flourished both before and since the christian era; a singular assemblage, which has called forth so much comment as to deserve a copious extract:—

" Lo buon maestro cominciò a dire :  
 Mira colui con quella spada in mano,  
 Che vien dinanzi a' tre siccome sire.  
 Quegli è Omero, poeta sovrano :  
 L' altro è Orazio satiro, che viene ;  
 Ovidio è 'l terzo, e l' ultimo è Lucano.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Così vidi adunar la bella scuola  
 Di quel signor dell' altissimo canto,  
 Che sovra gli altri, com' aquila, vola.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Traemmoci così dall' un de' canti  
 In luogo aperto, luminoso ed alto,  
 Sicchè veder si potean tutti quanti.  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Vidi quel Bruto che cacciò Tarquino ;  
 Lucrezia, Iulia, Marzia e Corniglia ;  
 E solo in parte vidi 'l Saladino.  
 Poichè' nnalzai un poco più le ciglia,  
 Vidi 'l maestro di color che sanno\*,

---

\* Dante here gives the first place among philosophers to Aristotle, the second to Plato. Petrarch gives the first to Plato, the second to Aristotle.

" Vidi Plato

Che 'n quella schiera andò più presso al segno

Seder tra filosofica famiglia :  
 Tutti l' ammiran, tutti onor gli fanno.  
 Quivi vid' io e Socrate e Platone  
 Che' nnanzi agli altri più presso gli stanno ;  
 Democrito che' l mondo a caso pone,  
 Diogenes, Anassagora e Tale,  
 Empedocles, Eraclito e Zenone :  
 E vidi 'l buono accoglitor del quale,  
 Dioscoride dico ; e vidi Orfeo,  
 Tullio e Lino, e Seneca morale,  
 Euclide geometra, e Tolommeo,  
 Ippocrate, Avicenna e Galieno,  
 Averrois che 'l gran comento feo." *Inf. iv. 85.*

Here we see poets, philosophers, statesmen and warriors, characters so various, and some of them of merit so doubtful, except to the all-seeing eye, Democritus, Averrois, and Saladin for example, as to occasion surprise at the favour shown them, and calculated to encourage hope that the heathen elysium at least may be closed against few who are not wanting in morality, though they may be deficient in the three theological virtues. It should be borne in mind, however, that this elysium of Dante is the abode of very imperfect happiness, where there is absence of suffering, but not accompanied with contentment, and where the sigh of unsatisfied desire is heard incessantly.

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Al qual aggiunge a chi dal cielo è dato ;  
 Aristotele poi, pien d' alto ingegno."

*Petrarch, Trionfo della Fama. c. iii. 4.*

Petrarch here says that Plato had arrived nearer than any other philosopher at the knowledge of christian truth, which is only attained by him on whom divine grace is bestowed.



“ Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,  
Non avea pianto, ma che di sospiri  
Che l' aura eterna facevan tremare.

E ciò avvenia di duol senza martiri,  
Ch' avean le turbe, ch' eran molte e grandi,  
E d' infanti e di femmine e di viri.” *Inf. iv. 25.*

“ Here, as mine ear could note, no plaint was heard  
Except of sighs, that made the eternal air  
Tremble; not caused by tortures, but from grief  
Felt by those multitudes, many and vast,  
Of men, women, and infants.” *Cary.*

How infinitely removed is such a state of reward from the  
beatitude of the Christian Paradise, where reigns

“ Luce intellettual piena d' amore,  
Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,  
Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore.” *Par. xxx. 40.*

“ Light intellectual, replete with love;  
Love of true happiness, replete with joy;  
Joy that transcends all sweetness of delight.” *Cary.*

“ O gioja! O ineffabile allegrezza!  
O vita intera d' amore e di pace!  
O senza brama sicura ricchezza!” *Par. xxvii. 7.*

“ Joy past compare; gladness unutterable;  
Imperishable life of peace and love;  
Exhaustless riches, and unmeasured bliss.” *Cary.*

Dante represents Predestination, Election and Grace, as exceptions to the boundless knowledge communicated by the beatific vision;—

“ Ov' ogni cosa dipinta si vede.” *Par. xxiv. 42.*

but adds that the deficiency is unfelt by angelic spirits, and therefore deducts nothing from their perfect content and happiness; the will of God being their will: and he thus in-

culcates the moral lesson that this ignorance of the divine will, and submission to it, should be a sweet medicine of hope and comfort to man. The mystic eagle says,

“ O predestinazion, quanto rimota  
E la radice tua da quegli aspetti  
Che la prima Cagion non veggion tota !  
E voi, mortali, tenetevi stretti  
A giudicar ; che noi che Dio vedemo,  
Non conosciamo ancor tutti gli eletti :  
Ed enne dolce così fatto scemo ;  
Perchè 'l ben nostro in questo ben s' affina,  
Che quel che vuole Dio, e noi volemo.”  
Così da quella immagine divina,  
Per farmi chiara la mia corta vista,  
Data mi fu soave medicina. *Par. x . 130.*

“ Predestination ! oh how distant lies  
Thy root from those, who do not wholly view  
The Primal Cause unfolded to their eyes !  
And you, ye mortals, be your judgments slow ;  
For we, by whom the Godhead is descried,  
Not yet the number of the elect do know.  
And sweet it is in ignorance to be,  
Because our bliss is doubly sanctified,  
In that the will of God, and ours agree.”  
So by instruction of that form divine,  
To clear the mist from my short-sighted view,  
Was given to me a soothing medicine. *Wright.*

The limits and first spring of divine grace are declared to be equally unsearchable.

“ Grazia da sì profonda  
Fontana stilla, che mai creatura  
Non pinse l'occhio insino al prim' onda.” *Par. xx. 118.*

“ Grace from a fountain so profound is pour'd  
That no created eye e'er pierced its source.”



The doctrine of this part of the *Commedia* is so correctly conveyed by the celebrated lines of Dryden, that they must not be omitted :—

“ We grant, ’t is true, that Heaven from human sense  
Has hid the secret paths of Providence :  
But boundless Wisdom, boundless Mercy, may  
Find e’en for those bewilder’d souls a way :  
If from His nature foes may pity claim,  
Much more may strangers who ne’er heard his name.  
And though no name be for salvation known,  
But that of his eternal Son alone ;  
Who knows how far transcending goodness can  
Extend the merits of that Son to man ?  
Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead ;  
Or ignorance invincible may plead ?  
Not only Charity bids hope the best,  
But more the great Apostle has express’d ;  
That if the Gentiles, whom no law inspired,  
By nature did what was by law required ;  
They, who the written rule had never known,  
Were to themselves both rule and law alone :  
To nature’s plain indictment shall they plead ;  
And by their conscience be condemn’d or freed.”

*Religio Laici.*

Following the usual and remarkable practice of Dante in producing two examples for illustration, one scriptural and one classical, we shall take Rahab and Ripheus as instances of salvation through grace which had inspired faith in the coming Messiah. The history of Rahab, and of her merit through faith and works, is known from Joshua ii. 1, Hebrews xi. 31, James ii. 25. She is pointed out to Dante in the sphere of Venus.



" Tu vuoi saper chi è 'n questa lumiera,  
 Che quì appresso me cosl scintilla,  
 Come raggio di sole in acqua mera.  
 Or sappi che là entro si tranquilla  
 Raab, ed a nostr' ordine congiunta,  
 Di lei nel sommo grado si sigilla.  
 Da questo cielo, in cui l' ombra s' appunta  
 Che 'l vostro mondo face, pria ch' altr' alma  
 Del trionfo di Cristo fu assunta." *Par. ix. 112.*

" Inquire thou wouldst,  
 Who of this light is denizen, that here  
 Beside me sparkles, as the sun-beam doth  
 On the clear wave. Know then, the soul of Rahab  
 Is in that gladsome harbour; to our tribe  
 United, and the foremost rank assign'd.  
 She to this heaven, at which the shadow ends  
 Of your sublunar world, was taken up,  
 First, in Christ's triumph, of all souls redeem'd."

*Cary.*

When Dante is in the sphere of Jupiter, the sixth heaven, he  
 sees the beatified souls of the Just so disposed as to form,  
 collectively, the figure of an eagle, the symbol of the Roman  
 Empire, and of his ideal universal Monarchy.

" Il segno  
 Che fè i Romani al mondo reverendi." *Par. xix. 100.*

" The sign  
 Which made the world revere the Roman name."

Six luminaries form the eye of the bird. In the pupil is  
 David, and in the circle round it is Trajan, Hezekiah, Con-  
 stantine, William II. of Sicily, and Ripheus. This high honour  
 is conferred on the fifth splendour in reward for his justice,  
 which is commemorated by Virgil, who records his falling  
 bravely in battle on the night of the burning of Troy.

" *Cadit et Ripheus, justissimus unus  
Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui;  
Dīs aliter visum.*" *Æn. ii. 426.*

" Ripheus also fell  
Who of the Trojans was the most renown'd  
For equity and justice, and it seem'd,  
Deserved a better fate; but to the Gods  
It otherwise appear'd."

It is not pretended that there is even a monkish legend to afford Dante a pretext for attributing foreknowledge and grace to Ripheus, and for his consequent assumption to heaven. It seems purely a poetical invention,—a fable of Dante, suggested perhaps by the story of Rahab, and pardonable for the goodness of the moral.

" *Chi crederebbe giù nel mondo errante,  
Che Rifeo troiano in questo tondo  
Fosse la quinta delle luci sante?  
Ora conosce assai di quel che 'l mondo  
Veder non può della divina grazia;  
Benchè sua vista non discerna il fondo.*" *Par. xx. 67.*

" Who, in the erring world beneath, would deem  
That Trojan Ripheus, in this round, was set,  
Fifth of the saintly splendors? now he knows  
Enough of that, which the world cannot see;  
The grace divine: albeit e'en his sight  
Reach not its utmost depth." *Cary.*

" *Tutto suo amor laggiù pose a drittura:  
Perchè di grazia in grazia Dio gli aperse  
L'occhio alla nostra redenzion futura;  
Onde credette in quella, e non sofferse  
Da indi 'l puzzo più del Paganesimo,  
E riprendeane le genti perverse.*" *Par. xx. 121.*

" He all his love on earth bestow'd on right,  
Wherefore from grace to grace God clear'd his eye

To the redemption of mankind to come ;  
 Wherein believing, he endured no more  
 The stain of Paganism, and for their ways  
 Rebuked the stubborn nations." *Cary.*

The first place in the circle round the eye of the bird is assigned to Trajan, the Roman Emperor to whom Dante appears to have been most partial.

" Il Roman prince\* lo cui gran valore  
 Mosse Gregorio† alla sua gran vittoria." *Purg. x. 74.*

" The Roman Prince, whose noble act impell'd  
 Saint Gregory to his mighty victory." *Wright.*

Dante relates a beautiful trait of the kindness and humility of Trajan's disposition. He supposes it to be represented in one of the sculptures on the marble face of the rock which encircles the terrace of Purgatory where pride is punished.

" Quiv' era storiata l' atta gloria  
 Del Roman prince lo cui gran valore  
 Mosse Gregorio alla sua gran vittoria ;  
 E dico di Traiano imperadore :  
 E una vedovella gli er' al freno,

\* Trajan who died A.D. 118.

† Gregory I. (S. Gregorio magno) chosen Pope A.D. 590, died A.D. 603.

The mighty victory of St. Gregory was the victory over death and Satan by the releasing the soul of Trajan from Hades, and is thus related by an old commentator :—" Sanctus Gregorius Papa dum legeret Historiam Trayani, considerans istum actum humilitatis et justitiae, rogavit Deum pro ipso, et brevi resuscitatus est, et postea salvatus, quia primo non erat. Sed Deus, ne justitia deficeret, dixit per Angelum Gregorio : quid vis, vel pati poenitentiam in hoc mundo, de eo quod debebat Trayanus, vel in alio ? Respondit : in hoc ; et sic passus est in corpore suo multas infirmitates dum vixit." Div. Com. Padova 1822. Vol. ii. p. 222.



Di lagrime atteggiata e di dolore.

Dintorno a lui pareo calcato e pieno  
Di cavalieri; e l' aguglie nell' oro  
Sovr' esso, in vista, al vento si movieno.

La miserella infra tutti costoro  
Parea dicer: Signor, fammi vendetta  
Del mio figliuol ch' è morto; ond' io m' accoro.

Ed egli a lei rispondere: Ora aspetta  
Tanto, ch' i' torni: ed ella: Signor mio  
(Come persona in cui dolor s' affretta),  
Se tu non torni? ed ei: Chi fia dov' io,

La ti farà, ed ella: L' altrui bene  
A te che fia, se 'l tuo metti in obbligo?  
Ond' elli: Or ti conforta; che conviene  
Ch' i' solva il mio dovere anzi ch' i muova:  
Giustizia vuole, e pietà mi ritiene.”

*Purg. x. 73.*

“ There, was storied on the rock  
The exalted glory of the Roman prince,  
Whose mighty worth moved Gregory\* to earn  
His mighty conquest, Trajan the Emperor.  
A widow at his bridle stood, attired  
In tears and mourning. Round about them troop'd  
Full throng of knights; and overhead in gold  
The eagles floated, struggling with the wind.  
The wretch appear'd amid all these to say;  
' Grant vengeance, Sire! for, woe beshrew this heart,  
My son is murder'd.' He replying seem'd;  
' Wait now till I return.' And she, as one  
Made hasty by her grief: ' O Sire! if thou  
Dost not return?'—' Where I am, who then is,  
May right thee.'—' What to thee is other's good,  
If thou neglect thy own?'—' Now comfort thee;  
At length he answers: ' It beseemeth well  
My duty be perform'd, ere I move hence:  
So justice wills; and pity bids me stay.' ”

*Cary.*

---

\* St. Gregory the Great.

This amiable instance of Trajan's benevolence and condescension is alluded to by the eagle, in the sphere of Jupiter, when he points out the dignified place in heaven to which his justice and the prayers of Saint Gregory had exalted him.

“ La parte in me, che vede e pate il sole  
 Nell' aguglie mortali (incominciommi),  
 Or fisamente riguardar si vuole,  
 Perchè de' fuochi ond' io figura fommi,  
 Quelli onde l' occhio in testa mi scintilla,  
 Di tutti i lor gradi son li sommi.  
 Colui che luce in mezzo per pupilla,  
 Fu il cantor dello spirito santo,  
 Che l' arca traslatò di villa in villa :  
 Ora conosce 'l merto del suo canto  
 In quanto affetto fu del suo consiglio,  
 Per lo remunerar ch' è altrettanto.  
 De' cinque che mi fan cerchio per ciglio,  
 Colui che più al becco mi s' accosta,  
 La vedovella consolò del figlio :  
 Ora conosce quanto caro costa  
 Non seguir Cristo, per l' esperienza  
 Di questa dolce vita e dell' opposta.”

*Par. xx. 31.*

“ The part in me, that sees and bears the sun  
 In mortal eagles,” it began, “ must now  
 Be noted steadfastly : for, of the fires,  
 That figure me, those, glittering in mine eye,  
 Are chief of all the greatest. This, that shines  
 Midmost for pupil, was the same who sang  
 The Holy Spirit's song, and bare about  
 The ark from town to town\* : now doth he know  
 The merit of his soul-impassion'd strains  
 By their well-fitted guerdon. Of the five,

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\* David.

That make the circle of the vision, he,  
 Who to the beak is nearest, comforted  
 The widow for her son\* : now doth he know,  
 How dear it costeth not to follow Christ ;  
 Both from experience of this pleasant life,  
 And of its opposite."

*Cary.*

The eagle declares finally that Ripheus and Trajan died Christians, and relates the extraordinary grace shown to the latter after death, through the prayers of a Pope, by which a temporary resurrection of the body was granted, to enable him to embrace the true faith and to die in it.

" La prima vita del ciglio e la quinta  
 Ti fa maravigliar, perchè ne vedi  
 La region degli angeli dipinta.  
 De' corpi suoi non uscir, come credi,  
 Gentili, ma Cristiani in ferma fede,  
 Quel de' passuri, e quel de' passi piedi :  
 Che l' una dallo 'nferno u' non si riede  
 Giammai a buon voler, tornò all' ossa ;  
 E ciò di viva speme fu mercede,  
 Di viva speme che mise sua possa  
 Ne' prieghi fatti a Dio per suscitarla,  
 Sicchè potesse sua voglia esser mossa.  
 L' anima gloriosa onde si parla,  
 Tornata nella carne in che fu poco,  
 Credette in Lui che poteva aintarla :  
 E credendo, s' accese in tanto fuoco  
 Di vero amor, ch' alla morte seconda  
 Fu degna di venire a questo giuoco."

*Par. xx. 100.*

" Those, in the eye who live the first and fifth,  
 Cause thee to marvel, in that thou behold'st  
 The region of the angels deck'd with them.

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\* Trajan.

They quitted not their bodies, as thou deem'st,  
 Gentiles, but Christians; in firm rooted faith,  
 This\*, of the feet in future to be pierced,  
 That†, of feet nail'd already to the cross.  
 One from the barrier of the dark abyss,  
 Where never any to good will return,  
 Came back unto his bones. Of lively hope  
 Such was the meed; of lively hope, that wing'd  
 The prayers‡ sent up to God for his release,  
 And put power into them to bend his will.  
 The glorious spirit, of whom I speak to thee,  
 A little while returning to the flesh,  
 Believed in him, who had the means to help;  
 And, in believing, nourish'd such a flame  
 Of holy love, that at the second death  
 He was made sharer of these realms of joy." Cary.

The extravagance of this legend which ascribes so great a miracle to the efficacy of the prayers of Pope Gregory I. can hardly be surpassed by any one in the "*Flos Sanctorum*,"§ and is the more extraordinary as the persecution of the Christians was dreadful under Trajan||. In a religion that

\* Ripheus. † Trajan. ‡ The prayers of Pope Gregory I.

§ Thé Nidobeatina Dante (1478) gives the legend with additional marvellous circumstances. *V. Purg. x. Comento.*

|| Among other horrid martyrdoms was that of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, who was torn to pieces by wild beasts in the public theatre at Rome. The anonymous author of "*L'Ottimo Comento*," a contemporary of Dante, and who says he was personally intimate with him, relates seriously of St. Ignatius, that when his heart was cut in pieces the name of Christ was found on every particle of it, written in letters of gold. This may serve to show that to appreciate the *Commedia* fairly, and the enlightened mind of its author, the manners, ignorance, and superstition of the thirteenth century must always be kept in view.



admits a state of Purgatory, the belief is not inconsistent that the period of penance there may be diminished through the prayers of the living, and which Dante has inculcated in many beautiful passages of the second Cantic of the *Commedia*; nor is the poet's fiction too bold which represents the Messiah, when he descended to Hades, to have released from a state of eternal suffering the many souls of those who had believed in his future advent (*Inf.* iv.). It was the will of the Saviour, and that is enough.

“ Vuolsi così colà dove si puote

Ciò che si vuole : e più non dimandare.”

*Inf.* v. 23.

But to pretend, and to propagate the belief that a mere man could have accomplished such a miracle as this, dishonours and prejudices the Church that gives it countenance. Its truth is never questioned by any one of the old Commentators of the *Commedia*, who in this may have been restrained perhaps as much by fear of the Inquisition as by credulity. The Jesuit Venturi, (1732) is the first who after relating it, not disrespectfully, observes that it is treated as fabulous and quite improbable by Baronio and Bellarmino. His opponent, the Franciscan Lombardi, (1791) in some degree defends it, observing that it is adopted by S. Tommaso d' Aquino with the following qualification, “ De omnibus talibus dici oportet quod non erant in *Inferno* finaliter deputati.” Such authority was enough for Dante's justification in introducing it; but by doing so he has subjected himself to the sneer of Venturi, who being justly offended at the anti-papal satire of the *Commedia*, which though directed only against individuals who deserved it, is so unguarded, as to furnish the protestant with dangerous



weapons for attacking Papacy itself, omits no opportunity of endeavouring to lower the public estimation of Dante, and asserts, that like a silly old man he was simple enough to give credit to this idle tale. "Dante fu anche egli in questo sì semplice che credette quella favoletta da vecchiarello, che Trajano, dopo 500 anni d' *Inferno*, ne fosse stato liberato per le orazioni di S. Gregorio intenerito delle morali virtù di questo imperadore." (*Par.* xx. 48. Nota 20.) Lombardi, in excuse of his client, fairly observes, that a poet who is privileged to feign may surely be allowed to embellish his work with a history which is celebrated and generally credited, though by some its corectness may be disputed. With regard to the contradiction, in supposing the release of Trajan from a place where the doom is eternal, (for he is stated to have passed the gate that denounces

" Per me si va nell' eterno dolore,"

and to be in the *Inferno*, and whether lower or not than the first circle, "*tra color che son sospesi*," is left doubtful,) Lombardi remarks, that Dante, as a theologian, was required to understand the word *eternal* in that accommodating sense, "*senso accomodo*," in which theologians understand certain general propositions, as "Omnes in Adam peccaverunt" (Rom. 3.) or that other, "Omnes quæ sua sunt quærunt, non quæ sunt Jesu Christi" (Philip. 2) implying, that the word "eternal" is to be taken in this passage as signifying only a long period of time; in the same manner as every superlative may be taken to denote the epithet in its greatest or least degree, or merely in a great but indefinite degree. If this latitudinarian sense, this "*senso accomodo*," be admitted, and



the belief in this legend of St. Gregory be taught by authority, what a short step conducts the disciple to the unorthodox doctrine of Origen,—that there is no eternal punishment, and that at some time, after a longer or shorter term of suffering, all souls will be released from the *Inferno*, and permitted (it may be presumed) to work out their salvation in Purgatory, or after a resurrection in the flesh, like Trajan, by penance in this world !

In considering the religious character of the *Commedia*, and the degree in which its ideas approach to the independence of protestantism, the above extracts are interesting, and they are of value as indications of a spirit of toleration, and as proofs, at least, that the tenets of Dante were not of that exclusive cast which confines salvation strictly within the pale of the Church of Rome. The following extracts give clearer evidence of his liberality, at the same time that they confirm the position of his attachment to Papacy, and to the peculiar tenets of Romanism.

Dante has ascended with Beatrice from the terrestrial Paradise to the heaven of the moon.

“ Beatrice in suso, ed io in lei guardava :  
 E forse in tanto in quanto un quadrel posa  
 E vola e dalla noce si dischiava,  
 Giunto mi vidi ove mirabil cosa  
 Mi torse il viso a sè : e però quella  
 Cui non potea mia cura esser ascosa,  
 Volta ver me sì lieta come bella :  
 Drizza la mente in Dio grata, mi disse,  
 Che n’ha congiunti con la prima stella.”

Par. ii. 22.

“ Beatrice upward gazed, and I on her ;  
 And in such space as on the notch a dart

Is placed, then loosen'd flies, I saw myself  
 Arrived, where wondrous thing engaged my sight,  
 Whence she, to whom no care of mine was hid,  
 Turning to me, with aspect glad as fair,  
 Bespake me : ' Gratefully direct thy mind  
 To God, through whom to this first star we come.' "

*Cary.*

The order of the spheres has been already pointed out in the remarks on the *Convito*, (p. xxxi.) and it has appeared that there are degrees of rank among the heavens and their inhabitants, and that the moon is lowest in honour as well as position : we are now to learn how this inequality may exist without envy, jealousy, or discontent. Beatrice informs Dante that the spirits whom he sees had been placed in the moon through failure of a vow :

" Vere sustanzie son, ciò che tu vedi,  
 Qui rilegate per manco di voto." *Par. iii. 29.*

" True substances are these, which thou behold'st,  
 Hither through failure of their vow exiled." *Cary.*

Among them he recognises with some difficulty Piccarda, the fair and virtuous sister of his friend Forese, whose beauty is so increased by her translation to heaven as almost to efface his recollection of her. She says to him

" Io fui nel mondo vergine sorella :  
 E se la mente tua ben si riguarda  
 Non mi ti celerà l'esser più bella.  
 Ma riconoscerai ch' io son Piccarda,  
 Che posta quì con questi altri beati,  
 Beata son nella spera più tarda." *Par. iii. 46.*

• • • • •

" E questa sorte che par giù cotanto,  
 Però n' è data perchè fur' negletti  
 Li nostri voti, e voti in alcun canto." *Par. iii. 55.*



Dante then asks whether her desires are fully satisfied in this lowest of the heavens.

“ Ma dimmi : Voi che siete quì felici,  
Desiderate voi più alto loco  
Per più vedere o per più farvi amici ?” *Par. iii. 64.*

She replies in the affirmative and gives the reason of her contentment.

“ Frate la nostra volontà quieta  
Virtù di carità che fa volerne  
Sol quel ch’ avemo, e d’ altro non ci asseta.  
Se disiassimo esser più superne,  
Foran discordi gli nostri disiri  
Dal voler di colui che quì ne cerne.  
Che vedrai non capere in questi giri ;  
S’ essere in caritate è quì necesse,  
E se la sua natura ben rimiri :  
Anzi è formale ad esto beato esse,  
Tenersi dentro alla divina voglia,  
Perch’ una fansi nostre voglie stesse.  
Sì che come noi siam di soglia in soglia  
Per questo regno, a tutto il regno piace  
Com’ allo Re, che in suo voler ne invoglia.  
In la sua voluntade è nostra pace :  
Ella è quel mare al qual tutto si muove  
Ciò ch’ ella cria, o che natura face.  
Chiaro mi fu allor, com’ ogni dove  
In cielo è Paradiso, e sì la grazia  
Del sommo ben d’ un modo non vi piove.” *Par. iii. 70.*

“ O brother, charity so calms our will,  
We know not what it is to thirst for more ;  
And full contentment every heart doth fill.  
To loftier region did we wish to rise,  
Our wishes would with his discordant be,  
Who for our portion gives these lower skies :  
Which may not be, if thou consider well

The real nature of the charity  
 Wherein 't is here our destiny to dwell.  
 Thus 't is essential to this state of bliss  
 To keep our wills within the will divine,  
 That ours may be identified with his :  
 And hence, though divers are the seats we fill,  
 Each is as pleased as is the King benign,  
 Who moulds our hearts according to his will.  
 Our peace is in His will—that ocean vast,  
 Whither all creatures tend, both those that He  
 Creates, and those by plastic nature cast.  
 Then was it clear to me that every place  
 In heaven is Paradise ; though different be  
 The appointed measure of the heavenly grace."

*Wright.*

To appreciate this beautiful passage justly, and to see its intention as a moral and religious lesson, we should remember the caution of Benvenuto da Imola, ever to keep in view the twofold signification of the *Commedia*, its reference to this life as well as to that which is to come : "*Materia sive subjectum hujus libri est status animæ humanæ tam vivente corpore quam a corpore separatæ*," (v. p. 1.) We are taught then, by Piccarda, that if our daily prayer, "*Fiat voluntas tua sicut in cœlo et in terra*" be fervent and sincere, we may be assured it will be heard, and that grace will follow, conferring contentment and a Paradise of the mind even amidst all the inequalities of station and fortune in this present world of evil and probation.

Piccarda relates that she had become a nun of the order of St. Clair, had been carried off by violence from her convent, and afterwards compelled to break her vows.



“ Dal mondo, per seguirla\*, giovinetta  
Fuggimmi, e nel su’ abito mi chiusi,  
E promisi la via della sua setta.

Uomini poi, a mal più che a bene usi,  
Fuor mi rapiron della dolce chiostra :  
Dio lo si sa qual poi mia vita fusi.”

*Par. iii. 103.*

Long discussions take place respecting the nature and obligation of vows, in which the scriptural instance of Jephthah and his daughter, and the classical one of Agamemnon and Iphigenia are introduced, nor is the moral omitted that such vows and sacrifices are rash and criminal.

“ Non prendano i mortali il voto a ciancia :  
Siate fedeli, ed a ciò far non bieci,  
Come fu Jepte alla sua prima mancia :

Cui più si convenia dicer : Mal feci,  
Che servando far peggio : e così stolto  
Ritrovar’ puoi lo gran duca de’ Greci ;

Onde pianse Ifigenia il suo bel volto,  
E fe’ pianger di sè e i folli e i savi  
Ch’ udir parlar di così fatto colto.”

*Par. v. 64.*

“ Take then no vow at random : ta’en, with faith  
Preserve it ; yet not bent, as Jephthah once,  
Blindly to execute a rash resolve,  
Whom better it had suited to exclaim,  
‘ I have done ill,’ than to redeem his pledge  
By doing worse : or, not unlike to him  
In folly, that great leader of the Greeks ;  
Whence, on the altar, Iphigenia mourn’d  
Her virgin beauty, and hath since made mourn  
Both wise and simple, even all who hear  
Of so fell sacrifice.”

*Cary.*

The reflections and doctrine of Beatrice on christian duties which immediately follow are of more general application, and afford an indication of Dante’s opinion on two most important

\* Santa Chiara.

church questions, the general diffusion of the scriptures, and the right of private judgment.

“ Siate, Cristiani, a muovervi più gravi :  
 Non siate come penna ad ogni vento,  
 E non crediate ch' ogni acqua vi lavi.  
 Avete il vecchio e il nuovo Testamento  
 E il Pastor della Chiesa che vi guida :  
 Questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.  
 Se mala cupidigia altro vi grida,  
 Uomini siate e non pecore matte,  
 Sì che il Giudeo tra voi di voi non rida.  
 Non fate come agnel che lascia il latte  
 Della sua madre, e semplice e lascivo  
 Seco medesimo a suo piacer combatte.  
 Così Beatrice a me com' io scrivo.”

*Par. v. 73.*

“ Be ye more staid,  
 O Christians ! not like feather, by each wind  
 Removeable, nor think to cleanse yourselves  
 In every water. Either testament,  
 The old and new, is yours : and for your guide,  
 The Shepherd of the church. Let this suffice  
 To save you. When by evil lust enticed,  
 Remember ye be men, not senseless beasts ;  
 Nor let the Jew, who dwelleth in your streets,  
 Hold you in mockery. Be not, as the lamb,  
 That, fickle wanton, leaves its mother's milk,  
 To dally with itself in idle play.  
 Such were the words that Beatrice spake.”

*Cary.*

The words of Beatrice are here the religious sentiments of Dante himself, and if slightly paraphrased they express the following temperate admonition :—

“ Christians, weigh well your duties and your actions. Be steady to your religious principles, nor veer about with every novelty of doctrine. Imagine not that purity is as easily at-

tained by following one sect as another. The old and the new Testament are open to you; 'they contain a certain and sufficient rule of faith and practice', and 'the highest philosophy adapted to the lowest apprehension'.\* Let them be your study; but in reading them, and exercising your private judgment, difficulties and seeming contradictions must occur, and doctrines apparently at variance with those which you have been taught. In such cases distrust your judgment. Remember the variety of learning and the long study required of the priesthood to enable them fully to understand and expound the scriptures, and think of your own comparative ignorance and incompetency. Be humble then and docile, if you would be wise. Your practical duties to God and man are clear to you; your speculative doubts should not alarm you: receive the explanation of them, and of the mysteries which you cannot comprehend but are called upon to believe, as they are taught by the Church whose oracle is the Pope. Let him be your guide, and be assured that such conduct is sufficient for salvation."

There are several points that call for remark in these verses. First, they show that instead of unanimity among Romanists, at that time, there was a wavering in many, and a disposition to embrace new doctrines; and we learn from a curious note of *L'Ottimo Comento* (*Inf.* x. Proemio) that in 1300 there were seventy acknowledged heresies, of which it gives the names and descriptions, besides an indefinite number hinted at by Thomas Aquinas.

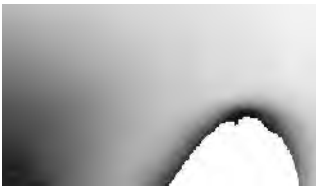
Next, we have the assertion of the great truth that the

\* Bishop Horsley.



Bible is the foundation of all christian doctrine, and moreover that it is open to all ; which however could not then be strictly said, as the only translation of it was in Latin, and consequently confined to the learned ; nor can it be truly open to all until translated into the language of every community on the globe. That Dante was most anxious for an Italian translation may be inferred from the long treatise of the *Convito*, urging the cultivation of the vernacular tongue as the fittest vehicle for the diffusion of knowledge, which in the prelude of the *De Monarchia* he pronounces to be the duty of every man who pretends to the title of learned ; adding the following enlightened sentiments, which we should hardly have looked for in that age : “ that the scope of all political speculation for civilizing the human race, should be utility ; and that the scope of civilization should be to promote the developement of human intellect.” Lastly, we are reminded of the principle of unity, contended for in the *De Monarchia* as so essential to peace in church and state ; of the desire of Dante that the reform in the church should not encroach on papal supremacy and independence in spiritual concerns ; that there should ever be one flock under one shepherd,—that the Bishop of Rome should be that shepherd, and that he should constitute the final tribunal for the decision of every disputable religious question.

We further observe in this passage that it gives an admonition only, that unlike the misnamed “ Holy Office ” it does not denounce a penalty for heresy, if scruples should arise in the study of the scriptures and in the exercise of reason, which should compel a conscientious, internal, and quiet dissent from



the Church. A separation from its communion must of course ensue; but unless the minds of the faithful were disturbed by a noisy, turbulent dissemination of the heresy no punishment was to be incurred. It was seditious, agitating, proselytizing heretics only against whom the Theodosian and Justinian codes were directed; and it is for such only, and for schismatics who propagate religion by the sword, that Dante has provided appropriate torments in his *Inferno*: the burning tombs for the open enemies of religious peace.

“ Qui son gli eresiarche  
Co' lor seguaci d' ogni setta, e molto  
Più che non credi son le tombe carche,  
Simile qui con simile è sepolto:  
E i monimenti son più e men caldi.” *Inf.* ix. 127.

Dismemberment and wounds for the destroyers of domestic peace and for schismatics.

“ E tutti gli altri che tu vedi qui  
Seminator' di scandalo e di scisma  
Fur vivi, e però son fessi così.  
Un Diavolo è qua dietro che n' accisma  
Si crudelmente, di taglio della spada  
Rimettendo ciascun di questa risma,  
Quand avem volta la dolente strada:  
Perocchè le ferite son richiuse  
Prima ch' altri dinanzi li rivida.” *Inf.* xxviii. 34.

The toleration allowed by Justinian was probably the utmost limit to which Dante thought it could safely be extended. He could scarcely have contemplated the possibility of an established religion of the state, and at the same time a toleration that should sanction meeting-houses and congregations where the wildest fancies that private judgment could devise

might be openly professed and preached. Still less could he have conceived the possibility of the experiment being tried in a great empire whether Christianity might not continue to exist without any religious establishment, and without any preference being shown by the state to one form or doctrine rather than to another; leaving religion wholly to the unbiassed voluntary act and feeling of individuals.

There is a verse however in the *Commedia*, which, if taken by itself, might imply that Dante would have conceded the right of liberty of conscience as broadly as it is exercised in the freest of Christian countries. St. Peter is made to say that the representative of the Messiah on earth should make no distinction among Christians, but show perfect impartiality to all,—that all should not only be suffered, but equally share his favour.

“ Non fu nostra intenzion che a destra mano  
De’ nostri successor’ parte sedesse,  
Parte dell’ altra del popol cristiano.”

*Par. xxvii. 45.*

No commentator has ventured to put this construction on the words, and it must be confessed that such latitude of liberality in 1300 is improbable: but the common explanation is not more satisfactory, that no distinction in favour should be shown by a Pope to Guelph or Ghibelline, that is, to friend or foe, which is surely more than could be expected from a successor of St. Peter.\*

\* Non fu nostra intenzione che parte del popolo cristiano sedesse alla destra e fosse favorito e fomentato dai nostri successori, come avvenne de’ Guelfi; e parte alla sinistra perseguitato ed oppresso, come accadde de’

The declamation of St. Peter which contains the above passage, and others that have been already remarked upon, breathes such bitter animosity towards certain Popes, such indignation at the abuses of the church, and so ardent an aspiration for reform, that we shall now present the whole of it in one connected view to the reader.

“ Poi procedetter le parole sue  
 Con voce da se tanto transmutata,  
 Che la sembianza non si mutò piue : \*  
 Non fu la sposa di Cristo allevata  
 Del sangue mio, di Lin, di quel di Cleto,  
 Per essere ad acquisto d'oro usata :  
 Ma per acquisto d'esto viver lieto  
 E Sisto, e Pio, e Calisto, ed Urbano  
 Sparser lo sangue dopo molto fieto. †  
 Non fu nostra intenzion ch'a destra mano  
 De' nostri successor parte sedesse,  
 Parte dall'altra del popol Cristiano : ‡  
 Nè che le chiavi che mi fur' concesse, §  
 Divenisser segnacolo in vessillo  
 Che contra i battezzati combattesse : ||

Ghibellini ; dovendo i Papi esser padri universali, non fautori di fazione.—  
*Venturi.*

Guelfi e Ghibellini : altri dalla Chiesa dannati, altri amici.—*Tommaso.*

\* St. Peter's countenance had reddened with shame at the recollection of the state of his Church ; his voice now changed from mild to severe.

† We may observe that six Popes are here named with honour.

‡ A Pope should be of no party.

§ The two keys of St. Peter are emblems of the authority of the Church. The golden key denotes the divine authority by which the priest absolves the sinner. The silver key denotes the learning and judgment requisite for the due discharge of the office.—*Cary.*

|| The Papal standard was borne in the crusade against the Albigenses.

Nè ch' io fossi figura di sigillo  
 A' privilegi venduti e mendaci,  
 Ond' io sovente arrosso e disfavillo.\*  
 In veste di pastor lupi rapaci  
 Si veggion di quassù per tutti i paschi.  
 O difesa di Dio perchè più giaci!  
 Del sangue nostro Caorsini† e Guaschi‡  
 S' apparecchian di bere : o buon principio,  
 A che vil fine convien che tu caschi!  
 Ma l' atta providenza che con Scipio  
 Difese a Roma la gloria del mondo,  
 Soccorrà tosto sì com' io concipio : §  
 E tu, figliuol, che per lo mortal pondo  
 Ancor giù tornerai, apri la bocca,  
 E non asconder quel ch' io non ascondo."

*Par. xxvii. 37—66.*

" No purpose was of ours,  
 That on the right hand of our successors,  
 Part of the Christian people should be set,  
 And part upon their left ; nor that the keys,  
 Which were vouchsafed me, should for ensign serve  
 Unto the banners that do levy war  
 On the baptized : nor I for sigil-mark  
 Be stamp'd on sold and lying privileges ;  
 Which makes me redden oft and flash with ire.  
 In shepherd's clothing, greedy wolves below  
 Range wide o'er all the pastures. Arm of God  
 Why longer sleepest thou ?"

*Cary.*

It was the inquisition set on foot by Pope Innocent III. in the beginning of the thirteenth century for the destruction of

\* The papal seal, or bulla, affixed to Indulgences, &c.

† Alluding to Pope John XXII. of Cahors.

‡ Alluding to Pope Clement V. a Gascon.

§ The deliverance expected through the Emperor, Henry VII. or some other Potentate.

the Albigenses, the unfortunate heretics of the south of France, and which was intrusted to Domenico Gusman, the famous St. Dominick, that first violated the moderation of Justinian's law, and employed spies and informers for the detection of secret heresies, and punished them with death. A crusade against these dissenting Christians was proclaimed; and the massacre which followed vies in horror with that under Domitian. Dante has made St. Peter himself brand this cruel warfare with reprobation,

“ Non fu nostra intenzion—  
 Che le chiavi che mi fur' concesse,  
 Divenisser segnacolo in vessillo  
 Che contra i battezzati combattesse.” *Par.* xxvii. 46.

But if he had visited this Pope\* with full poetic justice, he would have placed him with such murderous schismatics as Mahomet and Ali in the ninth gulf of his *Inferno*.

“ Guardommi, e con la man s'aperse il petto,  
 Dicendo: Or vedi com'io mi dilacco.  
 Vedi come storpiato è Maometto;  
 Dinanzi a me sen va piangendo Ali  
 Fesso nel volto dal mento a ciuffetto.” *Inf.* xxviii. 29.

A verse of the *Commedia*, which has been already quoted, requires still further notice, from its having been produced as evidence of a Protestant spirit, and of an allusion to a head of the Church very different from the Bishop of Rome.

“ Avete il vecchio e il nuovo Testamento  
 E il Pastor della Chiesa che vi guida:  
 Questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.” *Par.* v. 76.

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\* It may be remarked that the only Popes whom Dante censures by name, were reigning in his lifetime.

The phrase "Il Pastor della Chiesa," The Shepherd of the Church, if taken by itself, may mean not the Pope but the Saviour, the Head of the Church acknowledged by all Protestants; and in this sense Bayle seems inclined, erroneously in our opinion, to understand it. He has given an account of the dispute which took place soon after the Reformation as to the Catholicity or anti-papism of Dante, and has stated the principal arguments of the controversy so neatly that we gladly avail ourselves of them, and give the following extract:—

M. du Plessis Mornai\* raporte plusieurs opinions de Dante, qui ne sont guère conformes au papisme. "Il fit un Traité intitulé, Monarchie, où il prouve que le Pape n'est point au dessus de l'Empereur, et n'a aucun droit sur l'Empire; directement contre la Clementine '*Pastoralis*,' qui prétend l'un et l'autre; en vient mesmes jusques à dire en son Purgatoire:—

"Dì' oggimai che la Chiesa di Roma  
Per confondere in sè duo reggimenti,  
Cade nel fango, e sè brutta e la soma." *Purg.* xvi. 127.

"The church of Rome,  
Mixing two governments that ill assort,  
Hath miss'd her footing, fallen into the mire,  
And there herself and burden much defiled." *Cary.*

"Se perd elle mesme et la charge qui lui est commise." Réfuté aussi la Donation de Constantin, qu'il maintient n'estre de fait et n'avoir peu de droict: et pour ce fut par aucuns condamné d'Hérésie. ———Et plusieurs autres lieux s'en pourroient tirer contre les pardons et indulgences du Pape, et autres abus de l'Eglise Romaine, qu'il nous dépeint de sorte, qu'il est aisé à voir qu'il avoit bien remarqué la Paillarde de l'Apocalypse.

\* Mystère d'Iniquité.

Coëffeteau\*, répondant à ce passage, observe—

I. Que Dante étoit Gibelin, et plein de ressentiment des maux que lui avoit faite la faction contraire.

II. Que Dante advoue et la donation et la cause qu'on allegue de la donation, à sçavoir la guérison de la lepre de Constantin. Bien est il vrai qu'en ce Livre de la Monarchie, il tasche de prouver que Constantin ne l'a peu faire, d'autant que c'estoit démembrer l'Empire : mais un Poëte n'est pas juge de cette matière d'Estat.

III. Qu'en ce qu'il a dit des traditions, il n'y a point de mal, moiennant qu'il soit sainement entendu.

IV. Qu'il ne blâme que les Papes de son temps, qu'il traicte comme ennemis et persécuteurs de sa faction.

V. Que quand il parle de ces Pontifes, il proteste de révéler leur dignité, encore qu'il blâme leurs personnes.

VI. Qu'il n'a condamné que les imposteurs qui preschoient de fausses indulgences, ou faisoient un sordide trafic des vraies.

Voici quelques vers du Dante rapportés par Coëffeteau comme une preuve d'Orthodoxie a l'égard de la soumission qui est due au Pape :—

“ Siate, Cristiani, a muovervi più gravi :

Non siate come penna ad ogni vento,

E non crediate ch'ogni acqua vi lavi.

Avete il vecchio e il nuovo Testamento

E il Pastor della Chiesa che vi guida :

Questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.”

*Par. v. 73.*

Rivet† répond à cela que l'auteur du Livret Italien, intitulé “ *Avviso piacevole dato a la bella Italia*,” avoit recueilli les principales pièces, sur lesquelles Bellarmin‡ a fourni de défenses à Coëffeteau ; qu'il

\* Réponse au Mystère d'Iniquité.

† Remarques sur la Réponse au Mystère d'Iniquité.

‡ Roberto Bellarmino, a Jesuit. Died 1621. V. Appendix de libris suis de Summo Pontificio, continens Refutationem Libelli Italici, dicti, *Avviso piacevole dato alla bella Italia*, per Un Giovine Francese.

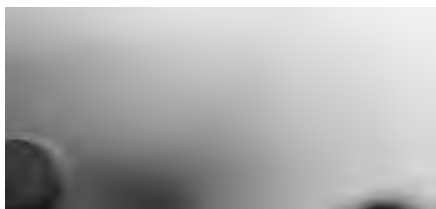


faut donc que le Lecteur, qui voudra entrer en examen de ces choses, confère à Bellarmin les Animadversions du docte Junius, esquelles il trouvera de solides confirmations contre toutes ces illusions et elusions, et verra clairement, que cet homme voioit l' Antéchrist en un siège respecté par lui, mais duquel il déplorait la profanation, enfin l' homme de péché qu' il detestoit, au Temple de Dieu qu' il révéroit : Rivet exhorte les Adversaires à prendre garde à ces vers de Dante :—

“ Di voi Pastor' s' accorse il Vangelista,  
Quando colei che siede sovra l' acque,  
Puttaneggiar co' regi a lui fu vista ;  
Quella che con le sette teste nacque,  
E dalle diece corna ebbe argomento  
Fin che virtute al suo marito piacque.” *Inf. xix. 106.*

“ To you St. John referr'd, O shepherds vile,  
When she who sits on many waters, had  
Been seen with kings her person to defile ;  
The same who with seven heads arose on earth,  
And bore ten horns, to prove that power was hers  
Long as her husband had delight in worth.” *Wright.*

Là certes, poursuit ce Ministre, il reconnoist que S. Jean au 17 de l' Apoc. a parlé du Pape, sous le nom de la paillardie assise sur les eaux, et de la beste à sept testes et dix cornes, quoique d' ailleurs il die du siège et de la puissance des clefs. Il n' y a personne qui nie que ces choses considérées en elles en toute Eglise ne soient recommandables. Mais si elles sont usurpées par un tyran, rien n' empesche aussi qu' on ne le décrive tel qu' il est——Quant au fait de la donation de Constantin, qui y prendra bien garde, trouvera qu' il en a reporté l' opinion commune et receue de son temps, par forme de concession, non sa créance, laquelle n' a jamais consenti à une telle absurdité. Pour ce qui concerne les six vers rapportés par Coëffeteau, voici comment son Antagoniste les traduit :—“ Soiez, O Chrétiens, plus tardifs à vous émouvoir : ne soiez comme plumes à tout vents, et ne croyez que toute eau vous lave, vous avez le Vieux et le Nouveau Testament, et Le Pasteur de l' Eglise qui vous conduit,



Celui-là suffit à votre salut.” Après quoi il parle ainsi : “ Coëffeteau voudroit-il bien conseiller à tous Chrestiens, pour s’affermir contre la légèreté en créance, de prendre le Vieux et le Nouveau Testament ? Il s’en gardera bien. Mais il n’a point de honte d’attribuer au Pape, qu’il est le Pasteur qui nous suffit à salut ; Et voudroit bien que Dante eust ainsi blasphémé, qui sans doute a parlé du vrai Sauveur qui nous guide par le Vieil et le Nouveau Testament.”

Nous avons ici un illustre exemple des illusions où l’on peut tomber, quand on s’arrête au premier sens que les expressions d’un homme offrent à l’esprit. Ceux qui lisent ces six vers de Dante, et qui les prennent “ in sensu obvio quem ipsamet propositionum verba præ se ferunt ;” qui les entendent, dis-je, de la manière que Innocent XII. veut que l’on entende les cinq Propositions de Jansenius\*, croient que ce Poète a voulu dire qu’il ne faut, pour être sauvé, que se conformer au Vieux et au Nouveau Testament, et suivre la voie que le Pape comme Pasteur de l’Eglise nous montre. Mais peut-être n’est ce point-là le vrai sens de Dante ; peut-être a-t’il voulu dire ce que Rivet lui attribue. Apprenons de là qu’un Auteur, qui veut éviter que les siècles à venir n’interprètent de plusieurs façons contraires ce qu’il a dit, souhaite une chose presque impossible. Si l’on prévoyoit les controverses qui s’élèveront dans trois ou quatre cens ans, on s’exprimeroit d’une manière plus précise ; mais je ne sai, si les langues fourniroient autant de termes qu’il en faudroit pour ôter les équivoques, et pour obvier aux chicanes.

Prenez garde à une chose, c’est que Dante fournit les preuves, et à ceux qui disent qu’il étoit bon Catholique, et à ceux qui disent qu’il ne l’étoit pas. L’Auteur de l’*“Aviso a la bella Italia”* a recueilli les dernières : Bellarmin a recueilli les premières ; et d’ailleurs il a éludé le mieux qu’il a pu tous les passages de cet Aviso. Gretser† nous renvoie à ce Cardinal : et c’est presque toute la réponse qu’il a faite au passage de M. du Plessis. “In Dante” dit-il, “luculentissima

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\* Bref d’Innocent XII aux Evêques du Pays-Bas, daté du 6 de Fevrier, 1694.

† Gretserus. Exam. Mysteriorum Plessæani.

testimonia pro Pontificis Romani auctoritate, proque omnibus illis capitibus quæ Plessæus et Illyricus attingunt, inveniuntur. Qua de re operæ pretium erit legere Bellarminum in libello proprio contra Italum quendam calumniatorem, qui, ex Dante potissimum, Romani Pontificis majestatem labefactare nitebatur : ad omnia enim profani hominis objecta respondit illustrissimus Bellarminus : et (cap. 19.) plurima loca ex Dante producit, quæ cum Plessæi et Illyrici delirationibus non magis consonant, quàm dies cum nocte, æther cum Tartaro.”\*

These extracts confirm the remark of a celebrated writer :—

“ Que Bayle traite le pour et le contre de toutes les opinions, qu’il expose les raisons qui les soutiennent, et celles qui les détruisent, qu’il est l’Avocat-général des Philosophes, mais — qu’il ne donne point ses conclusions.”

It is much to be regretted that Bayle, who has summed up the conflicting evidence so neatly, has not given his conclusions on the question of Dante’s Catholicity. In viewing him as a Christian philosopher, we think he would not hesitate to allow that his character is faithfully drawn in these beautiful lines of Pope :—

“ Slave to no sect, he takes no private road,  
But looks through Nature up to Nature’s God ;  
Pursues that chain which links the immense design ;  
Joins heaven and earth, and mortal and divine ;  
Sees that no Being any bliss can know,  
But touches some above, and some below ;  
Learns from this union of the rising whole,  
The first, last purpose of the human soul ;  
And knows where Faith, Law, Morals, all began,  
All end, in Love of God and Love of Man.”

*Pope’s Essay, Ep. iv.*

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\* Dict de Bayle. Art. Dante.



In viewing him as a Catholic, we think he would allow as readily that the following lines of Dryden convey correctly the most prominent theological opinions of the *Commedia* :—

“ The sacred books, most true, are full and plain,  
And every needful point of truth contain ;  
But what one Saint has said of holy Paul,  
‘ He darkly writ,’ is true, applied to all.  
For this obscurity could Heaven provide  
More prudently than by a living guide,  
As doubts arose, the difference to decide ?  
I then affirm, that this unfailing guide  
In Pope and General Councils must reside ;  
Both lawful, both combined, what one decrees,  
By numerous votes the other ratifies ;  
On this undoubted sense the Church relies.  
Nor would I thence the Word no rule infer,  
But none without the Church interpreter.  
This may be taught with sound and sure defence ;  
But mark how sandy is the weak pretence  
Which, setting Councils, Pope, and Church aside,  
Makes every man his own presuming guide.  
For did not Arius first, and others now  
The Son’s eternal Godhead disavow ?  
And did not these by Gospel texts alone  
Condemn our doctrine, and maintain their own ?  
Have not all heretics the same pretence  
To plead the Scriptures in their own defence ?  
What one can plead, the rest can plead as well ;  
For among equals lies no last appeal,  
And all confess themselves are fallible.  
It then remains, that Church can only be  
The guide, which owns unfailing certainty ;  
One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound  
Entire, one solid shining diamond ;  
Not sparkles shatter’d into sects.—

One is the Church, and must be to be true ;  
 One central principle of unity ;  
 As undivided, so from errors free ;  
 As one in faith, so one in sanctity." *Hind and Panther.*

" Eternalmente rimanendosi una." *Par. xiii. 60.*

Dante's approval of the constitution of the Church of Rome, as best adapted to the intellectual state of Italy in the thirteenth century, cannot admit of doubt ; nor can there be any of his sincere desire for its maintenance, although he has made this appear questionable to many, by his intemperate satire of Popes, and his impatient haste for a change and reformation, political as well as religious, that must have convulsed all Europe and brought Papacy into peril. According to him, no effectual and permanent good could be accomplished, without first wresting from the Pope the States of the Church and all temporal power. To reduce the Pope to the mere rank and station of spiritual Head of the Church, and Bishop of Rome, was the first and most essential blow to be struck ; for if he were permitted to remain one of the sovereigns of Italy, all hope of amelioration must be abandoned ; avarice, nepotism, papal aggrandizement, and political intrigue would still be the prime objects of his concern, and the interests of religion and the government of the Catholic Church would continue to be neglected. The welfare of the Christian world demanded that spiritual supremacy and temporal power should not remain united. To avert the evils which the *Commedia* deplures, the sword and the crozier must not be suffered to be in the same hand. Such was the doctrine of Dante.



“ Di’ oggimai che la Chiesa di Roma  
 Per confondere in sè duo reggimenti,  
 Cade nel fango, e sè brutta e la soma.” *Purg.* xvi. 127.

“ Soleva Roma, che ’l buon mondo feo,  
 Duo Soli aver, che l’ una e l’ altra strada  
 Facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.  
 L’ un l’ altro ha spento, ed è giunta la spada  
 Col pastorale, e l’ uno e l’ altro insieme  
 Per viva forza mal convien che vada;  
 Però che giunti, l’ un l’ altro non teme.” *Purg.* xvi. 106.

“ To Rome, which taught the ancient world good deeds,  
 Two suns were wont to point the twofold way,  
 That of the world, and that to God which leads.  
 The one hath quench’d the other,—with the crook  
 The sword is join’d; and scarce it need be told  
 How ill the twain such combination brook,  
 Since one no longer doth the other curb.” *Wright.*

Dante flattered himself, we may believe, that when this grand point was gained, religious reform would follow; that the Church of Rome would be restored to its primitive sanctity, and become the venerated establishment of every Christian state; that a strong and well-defined line of demarcation would be drawn between the temporal and spiritual powers, and every guard provided against trespass or encroachment from either side; that the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline would cease, and the reign of Saturn be revived,

“ Sotto cui giacque ogni malizia morta.” *Par.* xxi. 27.

But his experience must have prepared him for possible disappointment, and for the great and imminent danger that when the breach was made the flood would rush in, irresistible and unmanageable, and that a formidable party would

spring up, which, not content with the new-modelling of Papacy, would contend for its total abolition. In such an event the part that he would have taken is clear, and that he would have been found foremost in the ranks of those—

“ Che temono il danno  
E stringonsi al Pastor.” Par. xi. 130.

Enough has been said in proof of Dante's attachment to Papacy, for the purpose of contradicting Foscolo's assertion, that the scope of the projected reform was the introduction of a new and philosophical school of religion; but there are further proofs in the *Commedia* of his adherence to the tenets of Rome, which it may be interesting to bring forward, as his belief seems clearly to spring from conviction of their truth, and from their consonance with his own feelings, and not merely from his love of unity and conformity. The doctrine of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, and the worship of the Virgin are the most conspicuous of these tenets. The Protestant Churches regard them as vain inventions, grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word. Dante however appears to have been satisfied that Scripture and tradition together afforded sufficient warranty for their adoption. Purgatory was to him a doctrine of comfort and hope, as he declares at the opening of his second Cantic (Purg. ii. 16.); and the opposite one therefore, which denies any mediate state, any alternative but endless punishment or endless reward, must have been repugnant to him and fitted only to be a source of alarm and pain. He confesses his consciousness that the sin of envy, in a small degree, and that of pride in a far greater, required to be expiated; but he ex-



presses no doubt that his spirit after death would be transported to the realm of atonement and purification.

The reader will remember that the Purgatorio of Dante is an island, occupied by a single mountain of a conical form, having the garden of Eden on its summit, and belted by seven concentric terraces, where the seven sins are expiated in the following order—Pride, Envy, Anger, Indifference, Avarice, Gluttony, Incontinence. The gate which conducts to the first terrace, that of Pride, is some way up the mountain, and the space between it and the sea is the Ante-Purgatorio, where tardy penitents are doomed to linger for their appointed term. Dante is with Virgil on the sea shore—

“ Noi eravam lunghesso il mare ancora,  
 Come gente che pensa a suo cammino,  
 Che va col cuore e col corpo dimora :  
     Ed ecco, qual su 'l presso del mattino  
 Per li grossi vapor' Marte rosseggia  
 Giù nel Ponente sopra 'l suol marino,  
     Cotal m' apparve, s'io ancor la veggia\*,  
 Un lume per lo mar venir sì ratto  
 Che 'l muover suo nessun volar pareggia;  
     Dal qual com'io un poco ebbi ritratto  
 L'occhio per dimandar lo duca mio,  
 Rividil più lucente e maggior fatto.  
     Poi d'ogni lato ad esso m'appario  
 Un, non sapea che, bianco, e di sotto  
 A poco a poco un altro a lui n'uscio.  
     Lo mio maestro ancor non fece motto  
 Mentre che i primi bianchi aperser l'ali :  
 Allor che ben conobbe il galeotto,

---

\* Si ancor lo veggia. Costrazion piena: sì ovvero così faccia Iddio ch'io lo veggia ancora, ed è vago ed energico modo d'affermare.—*Biagioli*.



Gridò : Fa, fa che le ginocchia cali.

Ecco l' angel di Dio ; piega le mani :

Oma' vedrai di sì fatti uficiali.

Vedi che sdegna gli argomenti umani,

Si che remo non vuol, ne altro velo

Che l' ali sue tra liti sì lontani.

Vedi come l' ha dritte verso 'l Cielo,

Trattando l' aere con l' eterne penne

Che non si mutan come mortal pelo,

Poi come più e più verso noi venne

L' uccel divino, più chiaro appariva ;

Perchè l' occhio dappresso nol sostenne,

Ma china 'l giuso ; e quei sen venne a riva

Con un vasello snelletto e leggiero

Tanto che l' acqua nulla ne' nghiottiva :

Da poppa stava il celestial nocchiero,

Tal che pareva beato per iscritto ;

E più di cento spirti entro sediero.

*In exitu Israel* de Egitto,

Cantavan tutti 'nsieme ad una voce,

Con quanto di quel salmo è poi scritto.

Poi fece 'l segno lor di santa croce :

Ond' ei si gittar' tutti in su la spiaggia,

Ed ei sen gî, come venne, veloce."

*Purg.* ii. 10.

" Meanwhile we linger'd by the water's brink,  
Like men who, musing on their road, in thought  
Journey, while motionless the body rests.  
When, lo ! as, near upon the hour of dawn,  
Through the thick vapours Mars with fiery beam  
Glares down in west, over the ocean floor ;  
So seem'd, what once again I hope to view,  
A light, so swiftly coming through the sea,  
No winged course might equal its career.  
From which when for a space I had withdrawn  
Mine eyes, to make inquiry of my guide,  
Again I look'd and saw it grown in size

And brightness : then on either side appear'd  
 Something, but what I knew not, of bright hue,  
 And by degrees from underneath it came  
 Another. My preceptor silent yet  
 Stood, while the brightness, that we first discern'd,  
 Open'd the form of wings : then when he knew  
 The pilot, cried aloud, ' Haste, haste ; bend low  
 Thy knees ; behold God's angel ; fold thy hands.  
 Now shalt thou see true Ministers indeed.  
 Lo ! how all human means he sets at nought ;  
 So that nor oar he needs, nor other sail  
 Except his wings, between such distant shores.  
 Lo ! how straight up to heaven he holds them rear'd,  
 Winnowing the air with those eternal plumes,  
 That not like mortal plumes fall off or change.'  
 As more and more toward us came, more bright  
 Appear'd the bird of God, nor could the eye  
 Endure his splendor near ; I mine bent down.  
 He drove ashore in a small bark so swift  
 And light, that in its course no wave it drank.  
 The heavenly steersman at the stern was seen,  
 Visibly written Blessed in his looks.  
 Within, a hundred spirits and more there sat,  
 ' In exitu Israel de Egypto,'\*  
 All with one voice together sang, with what  
 In the remainder of that hymn is writ.  
 Then soon as with the sign of holy cross

---

\* The reader will notice the fiction, that it is at the mouth of the Tiber that the spirits of the dead assemble for Purgatory and Paradise. Casella says—

"Dove l' acqua di Tevere s' insala  
 Benignamente fu' da lui ricolto.

A quella foce ha egli or dritta l' ala,  
 Perocchè sempre quivi si raccoglie  
 Quale verso Acheronte non si cala."

*Purg.* ii. 101.

He bless'd them, they at once leap'd out on land :  
He, swiftly as he came, return'd."

*Cary.*

On this poetical description, and the theological points connected with it, much deserves to be said ; but this essay is becoming too long,

" Però salta la penna e non lo scrivo." *Par.* xxiv. 25.

It is a fit place, however, to introduce an admonition of Dante, which should be constantly remembered in reading the *Commedia* :—

" Aguzza qui, lettor, ben gli occhi al vero ;  
Che 'l velo è ora ben tanto sottile,  
Certo, che 'l trapassar dentro è leggiero." *Purg.* viii. 19.

" Reader ! here sharpen to the truth thy sight ;  
For unawares mayst thou transpierce the veil,  
So finely woven, and of texture slight." *Wright.*

Casella is one of the spirits who have sprung ashore ; and when Dante and he have recognised each other and conversed, Dante replies to a question thus :—

" Casella mio, per tornare altra volta  
Là dove io son fo io questo viaggio :  
Diss' io, ma a te come tanta ora è tolta?" *Purg.* ii. 91.

" To fit me, my Casella, to return  
Where now I am, this voyage do I take.  
But how by thee hath so much time been lost?"

*C. and L.*

Soon after we meet with the passage to which Milton's sonnet alludes\*—

" Ed io : Se nuova legge non ti toglie  
Memoria o uso all' amoroso canto  
Che mi solea quietar tutte mie voglie,

---

\* V. pages xxxiii. and 94.



Di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto  
 L' anima mia che con la sua persona  
 Venendo quì è affannata tanto.  
*Amor che nella mente mi ragiona,*  
 Cominciò egli allor sì dolcemente  
 Che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona." *Purg.* ii. 106.

" Then I : ' If no new law doth take from thee  
 Remembrance or the use of love-tuned song,  
 That erst was wont to soothe my every care ;  
 Please thee therewith a little to console  
 My spirit, that uncumber'd with its frame,  
 Travelling so far, of pain is overcome.'  
 ' Love that discourses in my thoughts,' he then  
 In accents so melodious began  
 That still its sweetness vibrates on my ear." *C. and W.*

Dante ascends the mountain along precipitous and difficult paths, and encounters numerous spirits of the negligent, many of whom entreat him to obtain for them the prayers of their friends when he shall be returned to the world. Evening comes on, and is described in poetry that will never be forgotten :—

" Era già l' ora che volge 'l disio  
 A' naviganti e 'ntenerisce il cuore  
 Lo dì ch' han detto a' dolci amici addio.  
 E che lo nuovo peregrin d' amore  
 Punge, se ode squilla di lontano  
 Che paja 'l giorno pianger che si muore." *Purg.* viii. 1.

" It was the hour that wakes desire anew  
 In men at sea, and melts the heart to tears,  
 The day whereon they bade sweet friends adieu ;  
 And the late-parted pilgrim on his way  
 Thrilleth with love, if from afar he hears  
 The bell that seems to mourn the dying day." *W. and L.*

Dante, ever attended by Virgil, descends into a valley where

some illustrious spirits are to pass the hours of darkness;  
they are heard to chant the evening hymn,

“ ‘ Te, lucis ante,\* ’ sì divotamente  
Le uscì di bocca e con sì dolci note,  
Che fece me a me uscir di mente.” *Purg. viii. 13.*

“ ‘ Te, lucis ante,’ so devoutly then  
Came from its lip, and in so soft a strain,  
That all my sense in ravishment was lost.” *Cary.*

The evil one appears in the form of a serpent, but flees at the  
sight of two guardian angels.

“ Sentendo fender l’ aere verde ali  
Fuggio ’l serpente, e gli angeli dier’ volta  
Suso alle poste rivolando ignali.” *Purg. viii. 106.*

“ Hearing the air cut by their verdant plumes,  
The serpent fled ; and to their stations back  
The angels up return’d with equal flight.” *Cary.*

As the Purgatorio is a symbol of human life in one of its states,  
and as the guardianship of angels in this life has never been  
treated in poetry so beautifully as by Spencer ; we gladly here  
introduce his stanzas.

“ And is there care in heaven ? and is there love  
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,  
That may compassion of their evils move ?  
There is :—else much more wretched were the case  
Of men than beasts. But Oh ! the exceeding grace  
Of highest God that loves his creatures so,  
And all his works with mercy doth embrace,  
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,  
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe !

“ How oft do they their silver bowers leave  
To come to succour us that succour want !  
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave

---

\* Lo inno che si canta nella Compieta.—*Landino. V. Breviarium Romanum.*



The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,  
 Against foul fiends to aid us militant!  
 They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,  
 And their bright squadrons round about us plant;  
 And all for love and nothing for reward:  
 Oh, why should heavenly God to men have such regard!"

*F. Q. Book ii. St. 1, 2.*

Among the troop of spirits resting in the valley, Nino, Judge of Gallura, recognises Dante, and at the end of their conversation beseeches him to inform his daughter Giovanna where he is, that he may have the benefit of her innocent prayers.

"Temp' era già che l'aer s'annerava,  
 Ma non sì che tra gli occhi suoi e' miei  
 Non dichiarasse ciò che pria serrava.  
 Ver me si fece, ed io ver lui mi fei:  
 Giudice Nin gentil, quanto mi piacque  
 Quando ti vidi non esser tra i rei!  
 Nullo bel salutar tra noi si tacque."

*Purg. viii. 49.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"Poi volto a me: Per quel singolar grado  
 Che tu dei a colui che sì nasconde  
 Lo suo primo perchè, che non gli è guado;  
 Quando sarai di là dalle larghe onde,  
 Dì a Giovanna mia, che per me chiami  
 Là dove agli 'nnocenti si risponde."

*Purg. viii. 67.*

"Time was now that air grew dim;  
 Yet not so dim, that 'twixt his eyes and mine,  
 It clear'd not up what was conceal'd before.  
 Mutually towards each other we advanced.  
 Nino, thou courteous judge! what joy I felt,  
 When I perceived thou wert not with the bad!  
 No salutation kind on either part  
 Was left unsaid."

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Then turning round to me : ‘ By that rare mark  
Of honour, which thou owest to him who hides  
So deeply his first cause, it hath no ford ;  
When thou shalt be beyond the vast of waves,  
Tell my Giovanna, that for me she call  
There, where reply to innocence is made.’ ” *Cary.*

Dante is transported when asleep by St. Lucia to the gate of Purgatory. He wakes, and Virgil thus addresses him :—

“ Non aver tema, disse il mio signore ;  
Fatti sicur, che noi siamo a buon punto :  
Non stringer, ma rallarga ogni vigore  
Tu se' omai al Purgatorio giunto :  
Vedi là il balzo che 'l chiude dintorno ;  
Vedi l'entrata là 've par disgiunto.” *Purg. ix. 46.*

• • • • •

“ Vidi una porta, e tre gradi di sotto  
Per gire ad essa di color diversi,  
Ed un portier ch' ancor non facea motto.” *Purg. ix. 76.*

• • • • •

“ Là ne venimmo : e lo scaglion primajo  
Bianco marmo era sì pulito e terso  
Ch' io mi specchiava in esso qual io pajo.  
Era 'l secondo tinto più che perso  
D' una petrina ruvida ed arsiccia  
Crepata per lo lungo e per traverso.  
Lo terzo che di sopra s' ammassiccia,  
Porfido mi pareva sì fiammeggiante,  
Come sangue che fuor di vena spiccia.  
Sopra questo teneva ambo le piante  
L' angel di Dio sedendo in su la soglia  
Che mi sembiava pietra di diamante.  
Per li tre gradi su di buona voglia  
Mi trasse 'l duca mio, dicendo : Chiedi  
Umilmente che 'l serrame scioglia.  
Divoto mi gittai a' santi piedi :



Misericordia chiesi che m'aprisse,  
 Ma pria nel petto tre fiate mi diedi.  
 Sette P nella fronte mi deserisse  
 Col puntun della spada; e, Fa che lavi,  
 Quando se' dentro, queste piaghe, disse." *Purg. ix. 94.*

\* \* \* \* \*  
 " Poi pinse l'uscio alla porta sacrata,  
 Dicendo: Entrate; ma facciovì accorti  
 Che di fuor torna chi'ndietro si guata." *Purg. ix. 130.*

" ' Fear not,' my master cried,  
 ' Assured we are at happy point. Thy strength  
 Shrink not, but rise dilated. Thou art come  
 To Purgatory now. Lo! there the cliff  
 That circling bounds it. Lo! the entrance there,  
 Where it doth seem disparted.'

\* \* \* \* \*  
 " I could descry  
 A portal, and three steps beneath, that led  
 For inlet there, of different colour each;  
 And one who watch'd, but spake not yet a word.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 " We straightway thither came.  
 The lowest stair was marble white, so smooth  
 And polish'd, that therein my mirror'd form  
 Distinct I saw. The next of hue more dark  
 Than sablest grain, a rough and singed block,  
 Crack'd lengthwise and across. The third, that lay  
 Massy above, seem'd porphyry, that flamed  
 Red as the life-blood spouting from a vein.  
 On this God's angel either foot sustain'd,  
 Upon the threshold seated, which appear'd  
 A rock of diamond. Up the trinal steps  
 My leader cheerly drew me. ' Ask,' said he,  
 ' With humble heart, that he unbar the bolt.'

Devoutly at his holy feet I fell  
 And pray'd that he would mercifully ope  
 The gate for me. But first of all I smote



Thrice on my contrite bosom. Seven times  
 The letter\*, that denotes the inward stain,  
 He, on my forehead, with the blunted point  
 Of his drawn sword, inscribed. And 'Look,' he cried,  
 'When enter'd, that thou wash these scars away.'"

• • • • •

"Then of that hallow'd gate he thrust the door,  
 Exclaiming, 'Enter, but this warning hear:  
 He forth again departs who looks behind.'" *Cary.*

With much labour the ascent is conquered, and Dante reaches the first terrace, where Pride is expiated. After long contemplation of examples of the sin and its punishment, Virgil reminds him of the duty of proceeding onward, warns him against loss of time, and points out an angel of pardon who is approaching.

"Più era già per noi del monte volto  
 E del cammin del Sole assai più speso,  
 Che non stimava l'animo non sciolto;  
 Quando colui che sempre innanzi atteso  
 Andava, cominciò: Drizza la testa:  
 Non è più tempo da gir sì sospeso.  
 Vedi colà un angel che s'appresta  
 Per venir verso noi; vedi che torna  
 Dal servizio del dì l'ancella sesta.  
 Di riverenza gli atti e 'l viso adorna,  
 Sì ch'ei diletti lo 'nviarci 'n suso:  
 Pensa che questo dì mai non raggiorna.  
 Io era ben del suo ammonir uso  
 Pur di non perder tempo, sì che 'n quella  
 Materia non potea parlarmi chiuso.  
 A noi venia la creatura bella,  
 Biancovestita, e nella faccia quale

---

\* The letter P, Peccato, sin.

Par tremolando mattutina stella.

Le braccia aperse, ed indi aperse l' ale ;

Disse : Venite, quì son presso i gradi,

Ed agevolmente omai si sale."

*Purg.* xii. 73.

" I noted not (so busied was my thought)  
How much we now had circled of the mount ;  
And of his course yet more the sun had spent ;  
When he, who with still wakeful caution went,  
Admonish'd : ' Raise thou up thy head ; for know  
Time is not now for slow suspense. Behold,  
That way an angel hasting towards us. Lo !  
Where duly the sixth handmaid doth return  
From service on the day. Wear thou, in look  
And gesture, seemly grace of reverent awe ;  
That gladly he may forward us aloft.  
Consider that this day ne'er dawns again.'  
Time's loss he had so often warn'd me 'gainst,  
I could not miss the scope at which he aim'd :  
The goodly shape approach'd us, snowy white  
In vesture, and with visage casting streams  
Of tremulous lustre like the matin star.  
His arms he open'd, then his wings ; and spake :—  
' Onward ! the steps, behold, are near ; and now  
The ascent is without difficulty gain'd.' "

*Cary.*

Dante feels relieved on a sudden from a great oppression and finds that the brand of the heaviest of the seven sins has been obliterated by the angel from his brow.

" Già montavam su per li scaglioni santi,  
Ed esser mi pareva troppo più lieve  
Che per lo pian non mi pareva davanti.

Ond' io : Maestro, di : qual cosa greve  
Levata s' è da me, che nulla quasi  
Per me fatica andando si riceve ?

Rispose : Quando i P\* che son rimasi  
 Ancor nel volto tuo presso che stinti,  
 Saranno, come l' un, del tutto rasi ;  
 Fien li tuo' piè dal buon voler sì vinti  
 Che non pur non fatica sentiranno,  
 Ma fia diletto loro esser su pinti." *Purg. xii. 115.*

" Now up the holy steps our way we gain ;  
 And far more lightly did I seem to move  
 Than when before I journey'd o'er the plain.  
 ' Say from what painful weight am I relieved,  
 Master,' I cried ; ' for as I wend above  
 Scarce by my senses is fatigue perceived.'  
 ' When all the P's upon thy forehead traced,  
 Which still,' he said, ' though less distinct, remain,  
 Shall, like the one, be thoroughly effaced,  
 A zeal so ardent shall thy feet excite,  
 They shall not only no fatigue sustain,  
 But bear thee upward with intense delight.' " *Wright.*

When arrived at the second terrace, where the sin of Envy is punished with blindness, the eyelids being fastened together, Dante converses with a lady of Siena, named Sapia, and makes a remarkable confession. She first says to him of herself,—

" Savia non fui avvègna che Sapia†  
 Fossi chiamata, e fui degli altrui danni  
 Più lieta assai che di ventura mia." *Purg. xiii. 109.*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 " Ma, tu chi se', che nostre condizioni  
 Vai dimandando, e porti gli occhi sciolti,

---

\* i P, le peccata, sins.

† A line which shows that Dante could indulge in a quibble as bad as our Shakspeare's—

" O Hero, what a hero hadst thou been !"—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

Sì com'io credo, e spirando ragioni?

Gli occhi, diss' io, mi fieno ancor qui tolti,  
Ma picciol tempo; che poca è l'offesa  
Fatta per esser con invidia volti.

Troppa è più la paura, ond'è sospesa  
L'anima mia, del tormento di sotto,  
Che già lo 'ncarco di laggiù mi pesa." *Purg. xiii. 130.*

" Though Sapià named,  
In sapience I excell'd not; gladder far  
Of other's hurt, than of the good befell me."

\* \* \* \* \*

" ' But who art thou that questionest of our state,  
Who goest, as I believe, with lids unclosed,  
And breathest in thy talk?'—' Mine eyes,' said I,  
' May yet be here ta'en from me; but not long,  
For they have not offended grievously  
With envious glances. But the woe beneath  
Urges my soul with more exceeding dread,  
That nether load already weighs me down.' " *Cary.*

On the sixth terrace, devoted to the punishment of Gluttony, Dante finds his friend Forese, suffering under the torture of hunger and maceration, who explains to him that although a deathbed repentance should have condemned him to linger in the space between the sea shore and the base of the mountain for as many years as he had lived, before he were permitted to enter the gate of Purgatory, he had been raised to the last terrace but one, through the prayers of Nella, his virtuous widow:—

" Ed io a lui: Forese, da quel dì  
Nel qual mutasti mondo a miglior vita,  
Cinqu' anni non son volti infino a qui:  
Se prima fu la possa in te finita  
Di peccar più, che sorvenisse l' ora  
Del buon dolor ch' a Dio ne rimarita,

Come se' tu quassù venuto? ancora  
 Io ti credea trovar laggiù di sotto  
 Dove tempo per tempo si ristora.

Ed egli a me: Sì tosto m' ha condotto  
 A ber lo dolce assenzio de' martiri  
 La Nella mia col suo pianger dritto:  
 Con suoi prieghi devoti e con sospiri  
 Tolto m' ha della costa ove s' aspetta,  
 E liberato m' ha degli altri giri.

Tant' è a Dio più cara e più diletta  
 La vedovella mia che molto amai,  
 Quanto in bene operare è più soletta."\* *Purg. xxiii. 76.*

"Forese, from that day, in which the world  
 For better life thou changedst, not five years  
 Have circled. If the power of sinning more  
 Were first concluded in thee, ere thou knew'st  
 That kindly grief which re-espouses us

\* The severe lines which immediately follow Forese's praise of his ex-plary widow, condemn a mistake in dress which, when carried to an extreme, is not less offensive to good taste than to modesty. Unhappily, we have seen the fashion revive in our own times, and Dante's satire as applicable to it and as well-merited as it could have been in 1300:—

"Che la Barbagia di Sardigna assai  
 Nelle femmine sue è più pudica  
 Che la Barbagia dov' io la lasciai.  
 O dolce frate, che vuoi tu ch' io dica,  
 Tempo futuro m' è già nel cospetto,  
 Cui non sarà quest' ora molto antica,  
 Nel qual sarà in pergamo interdetto  
 Alle sfacciate donne Fiorentine  
 L' andar mostrando colle poppe il petto.  
 Quai barbare fur' mai, quai Saracine  
 Cui bisognasse per farle ir coverta,  
 O spiritali o altre discipline?"

*Purg. xxiii. 94.*



To God, how hither art thou come so soon?  
 I thought to find thee lower, there, where time  
 Is recompense for time.' He straight replied:—  
 'To drink up the sweet wormwood of affliction  
 I have been brought thus early, by the tears  
 Stream'd down my Nella's cheeks. Her prayers devout,  
 Her sighs have drawn me from the coast where oft  
 Expectance lingers, and have set me free  
 From the other circles. In the sight of God  
 So much the dearer is my widow prized,  
 She whom I loved so fondly, as she ranks  
 More singly eminent for virtuous deeds.' "

*Cary.*

Before they part Dante expresses his reliance on a return to Purgatory, and adds that he cares not how soon the time arrive, such is the sad condition of his country.

" Lasciò trapassar la santa greggia,  
 Forese, e dietro meco sen veniva,  
 Dicendo: Quando fia ch' i' ti riveggia?  
 Non so, risposi lui, quant' io mi viva;  
 Ma già non fia 'l tornar mio tanto tosto,  
 Ch' io non sia col voler prima alla riva:  
 Però che 'l luogo u' fui a viver posto  
 Di giorno in giorno più di ben si spolpa,  
 E a trista ruina par disposto."

*Purg. xxiv. 73.*

" Forese let the holy train  
 Pass on, behind them lingering at my side,  
 And saying, 'When shall I again behold thee?'  
 'How long my life may last,' said I, 'I know not.  
 This know, how soon soever I return,  
 My wishes will before me have arrived.  
 Sithence the place where I am set to live,  
 Is, day by day, more scoop'd of all its good;  
 And dismal ruin seems to threaten it.' "

*Cary.*

Forese, speaking of the sixth terrace, says to Dante—

“ Tutta esta gente che piangendo canta,  
Per seguitar la gola oltre misura  
In fame e in sete quì si rifa santa.” *Purg. xxiii. 64.*

“ Every Spirit,  
Whose song bewails his gluttony indulged  
Too grossly, here in hunger and in thirst  
Is purified.” *Cary.*

In what follows Dante seems to acknowledge that he has not been free from this sixth sin also, Intemperance.

“ Se ti riduci a mente  
Qual fosti meco e quale io teco fui,  
Ancor fia grave il memorar presente.  
Di quella vita mi volse costui.”\* *Purg. xxiii. 115.*

“ If thou recall to mind  
What we were once together, even yet  
Remembrance of those days may grieve thee sore.  
That I forsook that life was due to him  
Who there precedes me.” *Cary.*

We have seen him confess the first and second sins of the category, Pride and Envy. Of his guilt of the third, Anger, we have but too much evidence, in the bursts of hatred and desire of vengeance so frequently launched against the states and individuals of the Guelphic faction. The pain, too, which he expresses from a consciousness that the violent death of his relative, Geri del Bello †, had been suffered by him to remain unavenged, is a memorable proof of his cherishing the

\* Virgil.

† Geri del Bello, fratello di M. Cione Alighieri, consanguineo di Dante, fu ucciso da uno della famiglia de' Sacchetti.



inheritance of family feuds and of his deficiency in the Christian spirit of forgiveness.

“ Allor disse 'l maestro : Non si franga  
Lo tuo pensier da quì innanzi sovr' ello :  
Attendi ad altro ; ed ei là si rimanga.  
Ch' io vidi lui a piè del ponticello  
Mostrarti e minacciar forte col dito,  
Ed udil nominar Geri del Bello.” *Inf. xxix. 22.*

“ O duca mio, la violenta morte  
Che non gli è vendicata ancor, diss' io,  
Per alcun che dell' onta sia consorte,  
Fece lui disdegnoso : onde sen gio  
Senza parlar mi sì com' io stimo ;  
Ed in ciò m' ha e' fatto a se più pio.” *Inf. xxix. 31.*

“ Then spake my master : ‘ Let thy soul no more  
Afflict itself for him. Direct elsewhere  
Its thought, and leave him. At the bridge's foot  
I mark'd how he did point with menacing look  
At thee, and heard him by the others named  
Geri of Bello.’ ”

“ O guide beloved !  
His violent death yet unavenged,’ said I,  
‘ By any who are partners in his shame,  
Made him contemptuous ; therefore, as I think,  
He pass'd me speechless by ; and, doing so  
Hath made me more compassionate his fate.’ ” *Cary.*

Of the fourth sin, Lukewarmness, Dante of all men could be least suspected ; yet, could even he acquit himself of never having, on any occasion, been wanting in zeal or perseverance in the execution of some public or private duty ? Then, of the fifth sin, Avarice, did he never covet some worldly good of which he was unpossessed ? Indeed, as the representative



of human nature, which he is in the *Commedia*, it was necessary that Dante should be branded with all the seven P's, for who, while life and thought remain, can be perfectly exempt from any of them? It is remarkable, however, that he describes himself as passing through the six terraces without tasting of their pains; but on the seventh, where the sin of incontinence is purified by fire, he thus describes his torment:—

“ Com’io fui dentro, in un bogliente vetro  
Gittato mi sarei per rinfrescarmi,  
Tant’era ivi lo ’ncendio senza metro.” *Purg.* xxvii. 49.

“ When enter’d—to relieve me from the heat  
I fain had thrown me into liquid glass,  
The rage of the combustion was so great.” *Wright.*

Thus the *Commedia* teaches that no human being can expire in a state of perfect innocence: that even the spirits of the Saints require to pass through the Ante-Purgatory and the seven stages of purification, however short the time in each may be, before they can receive the benefit of the waters of Lethe and of Eunoè, and be prepared for admission to Paradise: and thus, in Dante’s view of Christian theology a Purgatory is an indispensable step to salvation.

“ Quivi si raccoglie  
Quale verso Acheronte non si cala.” *Purg.* ii. 105.

The most striking and peculiar feature in the ritual of the Church of Rome is the dignified place and honours assigned to the blessed Virgin; and in the veneration of her Dante seems to join with all the warmth of religious attachment. In his earliest work, the *Vita Nuova*, his first announcement of the



death of Beatrice is in these words :—“ *Lo signore della giustizia chiamò questo gentilissima a gloriare sotto l'insegna di quella reina benedetta Maria, lo cui nome fue in grandissima riverenza nelle parole di questa Beatrice beata.*” And at the end of the Paradise, where all heaven seems filled by the mystic rose which is formed of the blessed on their thrones, St. Bernard directs the eye of Dante to the glory of the Virgin in the Empyreum,

“ Ma guarda i cerchi fino al più rimoto,  
Tanto che veggi seder la Regina  
Cui questo regno è suddito e divoto.

Io levai gli occhi, e, come da mattina  
La parte oriental dell'orizzonte  
Soverchia quella dove 'l Sol declina,

Così, quasi di valle andando a monte,  
Con gli occhi vidi parte nello stremo  
Vincer di lume tutta l'altra fronte.

E, come quivi ove s'aspetta il temo  
Che mal guidò Fetonte, più s'infiama,  
E quindi e quindi il lume si fa scemo ;

Così quella pacifica Oriafiamma\*,  
Nel mezzo s'avvivava, e d'ogni parte  
Per igual modo allentava la fiamma.

Ed a quel mezzo con le penne sparte  
Vid'io più di mille angeli festanti,  
Ciascun distinto e di fulgore e d'arte ;

Vidi quivi a' lor giuochi ed a' lor canti  
Ridere una bellezza che letizia

---

\* Oriafiamma, bandiera che si dice fu portata dall'Angelo per darsi al figliuol di Costantino ; sotto la qual bandiera chi guerreggiava non poteva esser vinto in battaglia : e così chi in questo mondo guerreggia contro il comun nemico sotto la bandiera, cioè protezione, di essa Vergine, non potrà giammai da lui esser vinto.—*Lombardi.*

Era negli occhi a tutti gli altri santi,  
 E s' io avessi in dir tanta divizia  
 Quanto ad immaginar, non ardirei  
 Lo minimo tentar di sua delizia." *Par. xxxi. 115.*

" ' But search around  
 The circles, to the furthest, till thou spy  
 Seated in state, the queen, that of his realm  
 Is sovran.' Straight mine eyes I raised ; and bright,  
 As, at the birth of morn, the eastern clime  
 Above the horizon, where the sun declines ;  
 So to mine eyes, that upward, as from vale  
 To mountain sped, at the extreme bound a part  
 Excell'd in lustre all the front opposed.  
 And as the glow burns ruddiest o'er the wave,  
 That waits the ascending team, which Phaëton  
 Ill knew to guide, and on each part the light  
 Diminish'd fades, intensest in the midst ;  
 So burn'd the peaceful oriflamb, and slack'd  
 On every side the living flame decay'd.  
 And in that midst their sportive pennons waved  
 Thousands of angels ; in resplendence each  
 Distinct, and quaint adornment. At their glee  
 And carol, smiled the Lovely One of heaven,  
 That joy was in the eyes of all the blest.  
 Had I a tongue in eloquence as rich,  
 As is the colouring in fancy's loom,  
 'T were all too poor to utter the least part  
 Of that enchantment."

*Cory.*

The Virgin Mary is unquestionably the most frequent and most favourite object of Catholic worship. The prayer to her, "*Ave Maria, gratia plena, ora pro nobis,*" comes first and last in the service appointed for each of the seven canonical hours of the day ; the most beautiful hymns of the Roman Breviary are addressed to her ; and her festivals are the most honoured of the year. It is true that in the Breviary the *Ave*



*Maria* is always accompanied with the *Pater Noster* and the *Credo*, and she is never addressed but as an intercessor, and thus the attribute of power is carefully reserved to the Majesty of the Trinity; but it must be owned that although the duty is inculcated of adoring the Almighty with all the heart and with all the mind, yet that the worship of the heart is almost exclusively given to the blessed Mary. It is a necessary consequence of the sanction given by the Church of Rome to the invocation of Saints. If the Scripture text (1 Tim. ii. 5.) does not restrict mediation to One Only Mediator, what Mediatrix could be imagined so fit an object of devotion, so compassionate, so benevolent, and possessing so much influence with Omnipotence as the mother of the Saviour? Such seems to have been the feeling of Dante, and in excuse for him, we shall give the pleasing and natural apology of a Catholic lady (certainly not an *esprit fort*, or of the school of *La giovine Italia*) as related by Moore in his "View of Society and Manners on the Continent in 1779." He is writing from Vienna, and says—

## LETTER XCIV.

Vienna.

Whether it is owing to the example of the Empress, or to what other cause, I shall not take upon me to decide; but there certainly appears a warmer and more general attachment to religion in Vienna than in any other great town in Germany. There is also a greater appearance of satisfaction

and happiness here than in many other cities, where religious impressions are more feeble and less prevalent. \* \* \* \* Many of my female acquaintance at Vienna have embroidered some fanciful piece of superstition of their own upon the extensive ground which the Roman Catholic faith affords. In a lady's house, a few days ago, I happened to take up a book which lay upon the table; a small picture of the Virgin Mary, on vellum, fell from between the leaves; under the figure of the Virgin there was an inscription, which I translate literally:—

“This is presented by —— to her dearest friend ——, in token of the sincerest regard and affection; begging that as often as she beholds this figure of the blessed Virgin, she may mix a sentiment of affection for her absent friend with the emotions of gratitude and adoration she feels for the mother of Jesus.”

The lady informed me, that it was usual for intimate friends to send such presents to each other when they were about to separate, and when there was a probability of their being long asunder. There seems to be something exceedingly tender and pathetic in blending friendship with religious sentiments, and thus, by a kind of consecration, endeavouring to preserve the former from the effects of time and absence. \* \* \* \*

I remarked in this lady's house another beautiful picture of the Virgin, ornamented with a rich frame, and a silk curtain to preserve it from the dust; I observed that she never looked at it but with an air of veneration and love, nor passed it when uncovered by the curtain without a gentle bending of the knee.—She told me, that this picture had been long in



the family, and had been always held in the highest esteem ; for that both her mother and she owed some of the most fortunate events of their lives to the protection of the blessed Virgin ; and she seemed not entirely free from a persuasion, that the attention of the Virgin was in some degree retained by the good offices of this identical picture. She declared, that the confidence she had in the Virgin's goodness and protection was one of the greatest comforts she had in life—that to her she could, without restraint, open her heart and pour out her whole soul under every affliction, and she never failed to find herself comforted and relieved by such effusions. \* \* I observed that devout Protestants found the same consolation in addressing the Almighty. She said, she could not comprehend how that could be ; for that God the Father was so great and awful, that her veneration was mixed with such a degree of dread as confounded all her ideas when she attempted to approach him ; but the blessed Mary was of so mild, so condescending and compassionate a character, that she could address her with more confidence.

She said, she knew it was her duty to adore the Creator of the universe, and she fulfilled it to the best of her power ; but she could not divest herself of a certain degree of restraint in her devotions to him, or even to the Saviour. But the blessed Mary being herself a woman, and acquainted with all the weakness and delicacies of the sex, she could to *her* open her heart with a degree of freedom, which it was not possible for her to use to any of the Persons of the Holy Trinity.—“*Regardez sa physionomie,*” added she, pointing to the picture,—“*mon Dieu ! qu’ elle est douce ! qu’ elle est gracieuse !*” \* \* \*

These sentiments, however contrary to the Protestant tenets and the maxims of philosophy, are not unnatural to the human heart.—Voltaire says, that man has always shown an inclination to create God after his own image; this lady formed an idea of the blessed Virgin from the representation of the painter, as well as from the account given of her in the Evangelists; and her religion allowing the Mother of Christ to be an object of worship, she naturally turned the ardour of her devotion to her whose power she imagined was sufficient to protect her votaries here, and procure them paradise hereafter; and whose character she thought, in some particulars, sympathized with her own.

Some zealous Protestants may possibly be shocked at this lady's theological notions; however, as in other respects she is a woman of an excellent character, and observes the moral precepts of Christianity with as much attention as if her creed had been purified by Luther, and doubly refined by Calvin, it is hoped they will not think it too great an extension of charity to suppose that her speculative errors may be forgiven."

In reverence of the Virgin Dante introduces her at the opening of the *Commedia* in her character of Preventing Grace, and attributes to her "The journey of his mind to God,"\* and consequently the invention of all the poetic and religious mysteries of his immortal Vision. When he is lost in the wood of error†, *Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte*

\* *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, the title of a work of St. Bonaventura.

† *La selva erronea di questa vita*.—*Convito*.



(*Inf.* i. 5.), and is stopped by irresistible opponents in his attempt to ascend the hill of Virtue, *Il diletto monte Ch' è principio e cagion di tutta gioja* (*Inf.* i. 77.), and is driven back in terror by the wolf, he is met by the spirit of Virgil, who tells him that his escape depends upon his taking a different road: that he will be his guide, and conduct him through Hell and Purgatory, and if he should wish to ascend higher will then leave him with one more worthy to be followed\*.

“ A te convien tener altro viaggio,  
 Rispose poi che lagrimar mi vide,  
 Se vuoi campar d'esto loco selvaggio.” *Inf.* i. 91.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Ond' io per lo tuo me' penso e discerno  
 Che tu mi segui, ed io sarò tua guida,  
 E trarrotti di quì per luogo eterno,  
 Ov' udirai le disperate strida,  
 Vedrai gli antichi spiriti dolenti  
 Che la seconda morte ciascun grida.  
 E vederai color che son contenti  
 Nel fuoco, perchè speran di venire,  
 Quando che sia, alle beate genti.  
 Alle qua' poi se tu vorrai salire,  
 Anima† fia a ciò di me più degna:  
 Con lei ti lascerò nel mio partire.” *Inf.* i. 112.

Dante is irresolute, and expresses his fears that his unworthiness must necessarily disqualify him for an undertaking so awful and perilous. His courage however is restored by the assurance of Virgil that he comes to him as the minister of Heaven, at the immediate request of Beatrice, who had been warned of the danger of her lover by St. Lucia, at the insti-

\* Beatrice.

† Anima, i. e. Beatrice.



gation of the blessed Virgin; all which is thus declared in the words addressed by Beatrice to Virgil:—

Donna\* è gentil nel ciel, che si compianghe  
Di questo impedimento ov'io ti mando,  
Sì che duro giudizio lassù frange.  
Questa chiese Lucia in suo dimando,  
E disse: 'Or abbisogna il tuo fedele

\* La donna gentile è la Vergine, alla quale nel XXXII. del Par. *Donna se' tanto grande . . .* E poi: *La tua benignità non pur soccorre, A chi domanda, ma molte fiate Liberamente al dimandar precorre.* Ch'è il caso di Dante. E la preghiera che volge a Maria St. Bernado, che conceda a Dante la visione della Divinità, e sempre ne custodisca gli affetti, conferma l'opinione mia.

La Vergine Maria, simbolo, se così piace, della grazia, perchè piena di grazia, chiede a Lucia, simbolo di quel lume di carità ' *Che mena dritto altrui per ogni calle,*' e che nel IX. del Purg. menerà Dante fino alla porta dell'espiazione: e Dante è il fedele di Lucia perchè ama la verità rivelata, e crede Dio unico bene dell'intelletto.—*Inf.* iii.

Siccome Beatrice, Virgilio, Rachele, sono persone reali insieme e simboliche, così la donna gentile e Lucia sono, al mio credere, persone reali: cioè la donna, Maria; Lucia la vergine che per la luce del vero, perdè la luce degli occhi; e odia ogni crudeltà, come quella che soffersse ingiusto dolore. La luce della verità, simbolicamente odia i crudeli, perchè la barbarie è ignoranza.

Beatrice, che secondo il Convivio, è la *sapienza felicissima e suprema*, siede con Rachele, simbolo della contemplazione (*Purg.* xxvi.) ' *Ma mia suora Rachele mai non si smaga Dal suo miraglio, e siede tutto giorno.*' Beatrice è la scienza teologica, Rachele la vita contemplativa; però seggono insieme. Veggasi il XXXII canto del Paradiso. Nella rosa celeste, in alto, è Maria; sotto lei, Eva; sott' Eva, Rachele e Beatrice: ma più su di loro due, di faccia ad Adamo, Lucia. La Vergine dunque era a Lucia più vicina. Lucia scende a Beatrice, Beatrice a Virgilio. Ciò vuol dire che per la scala degli umani studii Dante doveva salire alla scienza religiosa, quindi illuminarsi nel vero supremo, ed avere la grazia.—*Tommaso*.



Di te, ed io a te lo raccomando.'

Lucia nimica di ciascun crudele  
Si mosse, e venne al loco dov'io era,  
Che mi sedea con l'antica Rachele.

Disse: ' Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,  
Che non soccorri quei che t' amò tanto,  
Ch'uscio per te della volgare schiera? ' '\* *Inf. ii. 94.*

The remainder of the Canto is admirable for the grace and ease with which it commences the action of the poem, and valuable for the allegorical indication of the connection of Virgil and Beatrice in the salvation of Dante. Virgil says—

“ ‘ Poscia che m' ebbe ragionato questo,  
Gli occhi lucenti lagrimando volse,  
Perchè mi fece del venir più presto :

E venni a te così com' ella volse :  
Dinanzi a quella fiera ti levai  
Che del bel monte il corto andar ti tolse.

Dunque che è? perchè, perchè ristai?  
Perchè tanta viltà nel cor allette?  
Perché ardire e franchezza non hai,

Poscia che tai tre donne benedette  
Curan di te nella corte del Cielo,  
E' l mio parlar tanto ben t' impromette? ' ”

Quale i fioretti, dal notturno gelo  
Chinati e chiusi, poi che' l Sol gl' imbianca  
Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo ;

Tal mi fec' io di mia virtute stanca,  
E tanto buono ardir al cor mi corse,

\* Fatto amico di questa donna incominciai ad amare li seguitatori della verità, e odiare i seguitatori dello errore.—*Conv.*

S' io procaccio di valere

Il fo perchè sua cosa in pregio monti.—*Dante. Canz. Io sento sì d' Amor la gran possanza.*

Ch' io cominciai come persona franca :

' Oh pietosa colei che mi soccorse,

E tu cortese ch' ubbidisti tosto

Alle vere parole che ti porse !

Tu m' hai con desiderio il cor disposto

Si al venir con le parole tue,

Ch' io son tornato nel primo proposto.

Or va, ch' un sol volere è d' amendue :

Tu duca, tu signore, e tu maestro.'

Così li dissi ; e poi che mosso fue,

Entrai per lo cammino alto e silvestro." *Inf.* ii. 115.

" ' When she had ended, her bright beaming eyes

Tearful she turn'd aside ; whereat I felt

Redoubled zeal to serve thee. As she will'd,

Thus am I come : I saved thee from the beast,

Who thy near way across the goodly mount

Prevented. What is this comes o'er thee then ?

Why dost thou hesitate ? why in thy breast

Harbour vile fear ? why hast not courage there,

And noble daring ; since three maids, so blest,

Thy safety plan, ev'n in the court of heaven ;

And so much certain good my words forbode ? '

" As florets, by the frosty air of night,

Bent down and closed, when day has blanch'd their leaves,

Rise all unfolded on their spiry stems ;

So was my fainting vigour new restored,

And to my heart such kindly courage ran,

That I as one undaunted soon replied :

' O full of pity she who undertook

My succour ! and thou kind, who didst perform

So soon her true behest ! With such desire

Thou hast disposed my heart to come with thee

That my first purpose fully is resumed.

Lead on : one only will is in us both.

Thou art my guide, my master thou, and lord.'

" So spake I ; and when he had onward moved,

I enter'd on the deep and woody way." *Cary.*



The very important office assigned to Virgil in the *Commedia*, and the apparent incongruity of the act of Beatrice in selecting a pagan poet to become the guide of a penitential Christian soul, in the first part of its journey to God, has called forth ample comment and explanation. We are to remember that this drama of three acts is supposed to occupy three days at Easter 1300\*, at which time the dawn of the revival of ancient literature was just appearing, and the admiration of the merits of Virgil not merely as the greatest of poets, but as a prophet of the Messiah, amounted to a superstitious devotion. In this Dante participated, and hence the exclamation when he meets his shade in the wood of error :—

“ O se’ tu quel Virgilio e quella fonte  
 Che spande di parlar sì largo fiume ?  
 Risposi lui con vergognosa fronte.  
 O degli altri poeti onore e lume,  
 Vagliami’l lungo studio e’l grand’ amore  
 Che m’ han fatto cercar lo tuo volume,  
 Tu sè lo mio maestro e’l mio autore :  
 Tu se’ solo colui da cu’ io tolsi  
 Lo bello stile che m’ ha fatto onore.” *Inf.* i. 79.

When Dante and Virgil are crossing the sixth terrace of Purgatory, the poet Statius, who has joined company with them, relates to Virgil as follows :—

“ Tu prima m’ inviasti  
 Verso Parnaso a ber nelle sue grotte,

---

\* Dante’s fancy for “ trinal triplicities,” as Spencer calls them, is whimsical. The *Commedia* consists of three Canticles, each consisting of thirty-three Cantos ; the first Canto of the *Inferno* being introductory to the whole and making 100 Cantos.

E prima appresso Dio m' alluminasti.

Facesti come quei che va di notte,  
Che porta il lume dietro e a sè non giova,  
Ma dopo sè fa le persone dotte ;

Quando dicesti : ' Secol si rinnova  
Torna giustizia e primo tempo umano,  
E progenie scende dal ciel nuova.'

Per te poeta fui, per te Cristiano.  
Ma perchè veggi me' ciò ch' io disegno,  
A colorar distenderò la mano.

Già era il mondo tutto quanto pregno  
Della vera credenza, seminata  
Per li messaggi dell' eterno regno ;

E la parola tua sopra toccata  
Si consonava a' nuovi predicanti :  
Ond' io a visitarli presi usata.

Vennermi poi parendo tanto santi,  
Che quando Domizian li persegnette,  
Senza mio lagrimar non fur' lor pianti :

E mentre che di là per me si stette  
Io li sovvenni, e lor dritti costumi  
Fer' dispregiare a me tutte altre sette.

E pria ch' io conduceasi i Greci a' fiumi  
Di Tebe poetando, ebb' io battesimo ;  
Ma per paura chiuso Cristian fumi,

Lungamente mostrando paganesmo :  
E questa tiepidezza il quarto cerchio  
Cerchiar mi fe' più ch' l' quarto centesimo." *Purg.* xxii. 64.

" By thee conducted first,  
I enter'd the Parnassian grots, and quaff'd  
Of the clear spring ; illumined first by thee,  
Open'd mine eyes to God. Thou didst, as one,  
Who, journeying through the darkness, bears a light  
Behind, that profits not himself, but makes  
His followers wise, when thou exclaimedst, ' Lo !  
A renovated world, Justice return'd,



Times of primæval innocence restored  
 And a new race descended from above.  
 Poet and Christian both to thee I owed.  
 That thou mayst mark more clearly what I trace,  
 My hand shall stretch forth to inform the lines  
 With livelier colouring. Soon o'er all the world,  
 By messengers from heaven, the true belief  
 Teem'd now prolific; and that word of thine,  
 Accordant, to the new instructors chimed.  
 Induced by which agreement, I was wont  
 Resort to them; and soon their sanctity  
 So won upon me, that, Domitian's rage  
 Pursuing them, I mix'd my tears with theirs;  
 And, while on earth I stay'd, still succour'd them;  
 And their most righteous customs made me scorn  
 All sects besides. Before I led the Greeks,  
 In tuneful fiction, to the streams of Thebes,  
 I was baptized; but secretly, through fear,  
 Remain'd a Christian, and conform'd long time  
 To pagan rites. Four centuries and more,  
 I for that lukewarmness, was fain to pace  
 Round the fourth circle."

*Cary.*

The lines here translated by Dante are from Virgil's *Ecl.* 4.

"*Sicilides Musæ, paullo majora canamus,*" &c. &c.—

"*Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.  
 Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna:  
 Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.*"

Dante has adopted Virgil as the symbol of heathen philosophy, of reason, of the highest wisdom attainable without the knowledge of Christianity; by whose instruction in the science of nature, and of the human mind, and of man himself, in his individual and social character, a follower would be safely led to the science of morals and natural theology, and to earthly happiness, and be best prepared for reception of the Christian

virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and for heaven. We are to observe too that it is at the culminating point of human life, at the age of thirty-five, "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*," that this moral journey takes place, when the mind is strongest, and political and religious principles may be most securely fixed. This is the brief explanation of the allegory of Virgil conducting Dante through Hell and Purgatory, to the border of the terrestrial Paradise, and then leaving him to the guidance of Beatrice. This solution is given poetically by Virgil himself in his parting addresss to Dante:—

“ Come la scala tutta sotto noi  
 Fu corsa, e fummo in su 'l grado superno,  
 In me ficcò Virgilio gli occhi suoi,  
 E disse : ‘ Il temporal fuoco e l’ eterno  
 Veduto hai, figlio, e se’ venuto in parte  
 Ov’ io per me più oltre non discerno.  
 Tratto t’ ho quì con ingegno e con arte :  
 Lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce :  
 Fuor se’ dell’ erte vie, fuor se’ dell’ arte.  
 Vedi il Sole che ‘n fronte ti reluce :  
 Vedi l’ erbetta, i fiori e gli arboscelli  
 Che quella terra sol da sè produce.  
 Mentre che vegnon lieti gli occhi belli  
 Che lagrimando a te venir mi fenno,  
 Seder ti puoi, e puoi andar tra elli.  
 Non aspettar mio dir più nè mio cenno :  
 Libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,  
 E fallo fora non fare a suo senno :  
 Perch’ io te sopra te corono e mitrio.’ ” *Purg.* xxvii. 124.

“ When we had run  
 O’er all the ladder to its topmost round,  
 As there we stood, on me the Mantuan fix’d  
 His eyes, and thus he spake : ‘ Both fires, my son,  
 The temporal and eternal, thou hast seen ;



And art arrived, where of itself my ken  
 No further reaches. I, with skill and art,  
 Thus far have drawn thee. Now thy pleasure take  
 For guide. Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way,  
 O'ercome the straiter. Lo! the sun, that darts  
 His beam upon the forehead: lo! the herb,  
 The arborets and flowers, which of itself  
 This land pours forth profuse. Till those bright eyes  
 With gladness come, which, weeping, made me haste  
 To succour thee, thou mayst or seat thee down,  
 Or wander where thou wilt. Expect no more  
 Sanction of warning voice or sign from me,  
 Free of thy own arbitrement to choose,  
 Discreet, judicious. To distrust thy sense  
 Were henceforth error. I invest thee then  
 With crown and mitre, sovereign o'er thyself.'" *Cary.*

Of the various aspects under which the *Commedia* may be considered, the political is that to which Professor Rossetti has principally directed his masterly and very original *Comento Analitico*, and he has demonstrated the propriety with which Virgil is chosen for the symbol of the political philosophy of the Ghibelline Dante.

In the thirteenth century the government of Florence had fully asserted its freedom and independence, and renounced all fealty to the Emperor. The Guelph party was dominant, and was of course supported by the Pope. Dante's parents were Guelph; his preceptor was the famous Guelph, Brunetto Latini\*; and he engaged early in the military and civil ser-

\* There are no verses in the *Commedia* more tender and affectionate than those in which Dante expresses his regard for Brunetto Latini:—

“ In la mente m'è fitta, ed or m'accora,  
 La cara e buona imagine paterna,



vice of the republic. In the struggle between the aristocratic and democratic elements for preponderance, Dante, though a noble, seems to have inclined to the latter, and with political views enrolled himself in the company of apothecaries. In 1300 he was chosen chief magistrate, or first of the three Priors of Florence, an honour that was productive of all his misfortunes, but at the same time of his great poem and his fame. Shortly before this period the Guelphs of Florence had split into two violent and hostile factions, aptly designated the *Bianchi* and the *Neri*, whose dissensions destroyed the peace of the city. Dante laboured with impartiality to repress their disorders, but rather favoured the party of the *Bianchi* as the least unreasonable, and they were also joined by the Ghibellines. Boniface VIII. became alarmed for the supremacy of Guelphism in Florence; and sent Charles of Valois with a large force to take possession of the city under pretence of restoring its tranquillity. Dante vigorously resisted this foreign interference, but in vain, and his opposition and the suspicion of his Ghibellinism sealed his ruin. He was sent on an embassy to Rome, and while there was sentenced to banishment, together with six hundred of his party: and by a

Di voi nel mondo, quando ad ora ad ora  
 Mi 'nsegnavate come l'uom s'eterna:  
 E quant'io l'habbo in grado, mentre io vivo  
 Convien che nella lingua mia si scerna." *Inf.* xv. 82.

How strange, that with such feelings, however urgent the call for poetic justice may have been, Dante should not have placed Brunetto in the seventh terrace of the Purgatorio instead of the seventh of the Inferno!



second decree was to be burned alive if he should be apprehended. From this time the Bianchi and the Ghibellines were one, and Dante renounced for ever his hereditary political principles and became the strenuous assertor of the rights of the Emperor. He went forth to exile with a magnanimity that we must admire—

“ Ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura.” *Par.* xvii. 24.

“ Con animo che vince ogni battaglia.” *Inf.* xxiv. 53.

but inflamed with indignation and wrath against Florence,

“ Quello ingrato popolo maligno  
Che discese di Fiesole ab antico,  
E tiene ancor del monte e del macigno.” *Inf.* xv. 61.

and harbouring a vindictive anti-papal spirit, which he vented without moderation or reverence, and regardless of the consequences to religion and social order. This we must condemn. In our view it forms a dark and defective spot in that inestimable gem, the *Commedia*; but in the view of the early reformers, and of the modern school of Foscolo, it constitutes its greatest worth and brilliancy.

His politics having undergone this complete revolution and become monarchical, and having determined to avow it in his poem and to proclaim himself the partizan of the Emperor, we see an additional reason for his adopting Virgil, the poet of Augustus, for his model and his guide. This remark was first made by Professor Rossetti, and he has distinguished the offices of the two guides, Virgil and Beatrice, with great clearness in the preliminary discourse of his comment.

“ Non è difficile il vedere, perchè Virgilio venga rammentato come *cantore di quel giusto figlinol d'Anchise, che venne da Troja*; il quale *fu dell' alma Roma e del suo Impero nell' Empireo ciel per padre eletto* (*Inf.* 11); di quel figlinol d'Anchise, che avea portato dalla Frigia in Italia l'Aquila, che poi divenne lo stemma de' Cesari, e passò di mano in mano sin agli ultimi di tal nome; come vedremo là dove il poeta s'industria provare i dritti dell' Imperadore d'Austria, detto *Imperator Romanorum* (*Parad.* vi.).——Virgilio dunque è figura della Filosofia politica, fondatrice ed ordinatrice dell' Impero: di quella Filosofia che, presa in ampio senso, forma la mente e il cuore degli nomini con le intellettuali e le morali discipline, pel miglioramento della umana società; di quella Filosofia che regola lo stato col civil reggimento di un solo, maggior di tutti e sol minor delle leggi; è in somma la Filosofia di un saggio Ghibellino, la Filosofia di chi scrisse il libro di *Monarchia*.——Dante si scelse due guide pel suo viaggio, Virgilio e Beatrice: e queste due guide son tali che si riverberano scambievolmente. Venga dunque Beatrice a spargere i suoi raggi su Virgilio, di modo che sia quasi impossibile il non riconoscerlo.——Dirò dunque che l'uno è quello che produce un buon governo rettificando i costumi; l'altra è quella che dopo una virtuosa vita guida l'uomo purificato al suo fattore: l'uno fa con la società quel che dee fare un buon regolatore della vita temporale; l'altra fa quello che ha da fare un'ottima direttrice della vita spirituale: in poche parole, l'uno è la Politica secondo la Monarchia, l'altra è la Religione secondo il Cristianesimo; l'uno è l'ufficio d'un saggio Imperadore, l'altra è quello di un santo Pontefice; per cui tendono, come Dante dice, a due beatitudini; quella della *vita attiva* di questo mondo, rappresentata nel Paradiso terrestre: e quella della *vita contemplativa* dell'altro, figurata nel celeste: onde l'uomo fosse quaggiù felice, per quanto al uom retto è dato, e felicissimo lassù, secondo che ad uom giusto è promesso. E da ciò deriva ch' essendo divisi di uffizio, Dante concepì l'idea che Virgilio dovesse accompagnarlo sino al terrestre Paradiso; e lasciarlo poi dovesse quando

Beatrice ne assume la direzione per condurlo al celeste."—*Comento Analitico. Disc. Prelim.*

We have already remarked that Dante gave his countenance to the impracticable theory of a universal monarchy, one of the many follies ‘*che laggiù dormendo si sogna*’ (*Par.* xxix); it may be pardoned in a poet, but was even encouraged by great lawyers in those days, and we find it engrafted by Bartholi in the Golden Bull of the Emperor Charles IV. 1236. Dante however cherished a more practical theory, and fervently hoped in the accomplishment of a confederation that should unite the whole Italian peninsula under a powerful but limited Monarch, and he considered that that Monarch should be the Emperor; he having unquestionable hereditary rights of government, and being the legitimate heir of the Cæsars.

“ Ei stabiliva nell’ Imperadore questo capo supremo, come quello ch’era generalmente stimato il legittimo erede del diadema de’ Cesari; e pare ch’ei lo bramasse (sebbene con assai maggior autorità e potere) qual è ora il Presidente degli Stati Uniti: quasi che vagheggiasse in ispirito la forma di quel governo, che poi si vide sorgere in quell’ emisfero, dov’ ei nel suo poema stabiliva il Paradiso terrestre.”—*Vita di Dante. Rossetti.*

Dante pathetically laments the distracted state of Italy in 1300, arising from the want of such a supreme controlling power as Professor Rossetti has described,—

“ Ahi! serva Italia, di dolore ostello,  
Nave senza nocchiero in gran tempesta,  
Non donna di provincie, ma bordello.” *Purg.* vi. 76—126.

“ Ah, servile Italy! thou inn of grief!  
Vessel without a pilot in loud storm!

Lady no longer of fair provinces,  
 But lazar-house impure! this gentle spirit\*,  
 Ev'n from the pleasant sound of his dear land,  
 Was prompt to greet a fellow-citizen  
 With such glad cheer: while now thy living ones  
 In thee abide not without war; and one  
 Malicious gnaws another; ay, of those  
 Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.  
 Seek, wretched one! around thy sea coasts wide;  
 Then homeward to thy bosom turn; and mark,  
 If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.  
 What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand  
 Refitted, if thy saddle be unpress'd?  
 Nought doth he now but aggravate thy shame.  
 Ah, people! thou obedient still shouldst live,  
 And in the saddle let thy Cæsar sit,  
 If well thou markedst that which God commands†.  
 "Look how that beast to fellness hath relapsed,  
 From having lost correction of the spur,  
 Since to the bridle thou hast set thine hand,  
 O German Albert!‡ who abandon'st her  
 That is grown savage and unmanageable,  
 When thou shouldst clasp her flanks with forked heels.  
 Just judgement from the stars fall on thy blood;  
 And be it strange and manifest to all;  
 Such as may strike thy successor§ with dread;  
 For that thy sire|| and thou have suffer'd thus,

---

\* Sordello, who had joyfully greeted Virgil.

† Alluding to Mark xii. 17, and to the *De Monarchia*.

‡ The Emperor Albert I. 1298. was murdered 1308.

§ Henry VII. of Luxemburg.

|| The Emperor Rodolph of Hapsburg the first of the House of Austria,

"Rodolfo imperator fu, che potea

Sanar le piaghe ch' hanno Italia morta,

Si che tardi per altri si ricrea."

*Purg.* vii. 94.

Through greediness of yonder realms detain'd,  
 The garden of the empire to run waste.  
 Come see the Capulets and Montagues,  
 The Filippeschi and Monaldi, man  
 Who carest for nought! those sunk in grief, and these  
 With dire suspicion rack'd. Come, cruel one!  
 Come, and behold the oppression of the nobles,  
 And mark their injuries; and thou mayst see  
 What safety Santafore can supply.  
 Come and behold thy Rome, who calls on thee,  
 Desolate widow, day and night with moans,  
 ' My Cæsar, why dost thou desert my side? '  
 Come, and behold what love among thy people:  
 And if no pity touches thee for us,  
 Come and blush for thine own report. For me,  
 If it be lawful: O Almighty Power!  
 Who wast in earth for our sakes crucified,  
 Are thy just eyes turn'd elsewhere? or is this  
 A preparation, in the wondrous depth  
 Of thy sage counsel, made for some good end,  
 Entirely from our reach of thought cut off?  
 So are the Italian cities all o'erthrong'd  
 With tyrants, and a great Marcellus made  
 Of every petty factious villager."

Cary.

We see in the foregoing picture the disgust created in Dante's mind by the general misrule of the Italian States, by the oppression of the people in the oligarchies, and of the nobles in the democracies, and by the absurd pretensions in the latter of every clown and artisan to set himself up for a patriot and a Marcellus. The faults of both Guelphs and Ghibellines he declares to be equally notorious and condemnable—

" Sî ch' è forte a veder qual più si falli." *Par.* vi. 102.

His only hopes of salutary reform rested on the Emperor, and he fondly fancied they were about to be realized when

Henry of Luxemburg was elected in 1308; a prince of the very highest endowments; and who was resolved upon recovering his rights in Italy, which had been lost or lay dormant, through the selfishness or indolence of his immediate predecessors. To him Dante dedicated his *De Monarchia*, in which the aspiration for a monarchy is carefully coupled with one as fervent for the security of liberty and the supremacy of the law. Despotism whether of one man or of the many was alike odious to him. In his *Commedia* he proves his love of liberty by showing us the elder Brutus in Elysium; and Cato of Utica in the Ante-Purgatory, presiding over the spirits who have freed themselves from the slavery of Satan—

“ Secretosque pios, his dantem jura Catonem.” *Æn.* viii. 670.

But where has he placed the younger Brutus? His republican virtues were many and must have been appreciated; but his conspiracy against his benefactor and friend, and his being the traitor and assassin\* of Cæsar cancelled them all; and we see him and Cassius, with Judas Iscariot between them, gnashed, in the triple jaw of Satan, and thus furnishing an eternal feast to the Principle of evil (*Inf.* xxxiv.).

Allusions to the progress and disappointments of Henry VII. in Italy are most ingeniously detected by Professor Rossetti in allegories of the *Commedia*. His short career and the

\* St. Thomas Aquinas in his treatise “*De Regimine Principum*” lays down the duties of the people suffering under a tyrant as follows:—

“ Le tyran, s’il se contient en de certaines bornes, doit être supporté, de crainte d’un plus grand mal : s’il excède toute mesure, il peut être déposé, jugé même par un pouvoir régulièrement constitué ; mais les attentats contre sa personne, qui seraient l’œuvre du fanatisme personnel ou de la vengeance privée, demeurerait d’inexcusables crimes.”—*Ozanam*, p. 398.



hopes of Dante were extinguished by his death in 1313. He appears to have been universally respected, and beloved and lamented by all except the Guelphs to whom he was scarcely less formidable than Frederic I., and who were thus relieved from imminent danger to their ascendancy; his virtues however are done justice to by his contemporary, the honest Guelph and chronicler *G. Villani*:—

“Henry, Count of Luxemburg, held the imperial power three years, seven months, and eighteen days, from his first coronation to his death. He was a man wise, and just, and gracious; brave and intrepid in arms; a man of honour and a good catholic; and although by his lineage he was of no great condition, yet he was of a magnanimous heart, much feared and held in awe; and if he had lived longer, would have done the greatest things.”\*—*G. Villani*, lib. ix. cap. 1.

Dante has conferred the highest honour on Henry VII. within the power of a Christian poet, in foreshowing his destined throne in Paradise; an apotheosis, unlike the deification of Augustus by Virgil, in being purely disinterested, and free from all suspicion of flattery, “the incense kindled at the Muses’ flame” from which some future benefit might be gained.

- \* Queen Katherine’s praise of Griffith may be well applied to *G. Villani*:

*Kath.*—“After my death I wish no other herald,  
No other speaker of my living actions,  
To keep mine honour from corruption,  
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.  
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,  
With thy religious truth and modesty,  
Now in his ashes honour: Peace be with him!”

*K. Henry VIII. act 4. sc. 2.*



When this part of the poem was written Henry was dead, and all Dante's bright visions of good had died with him. The opposition he had met with was moreover a painful warning to Dante that the time was not yet come for the political change for which he thirsted, and must have made him sensible that his country was still far removed from the intellectual ripeness requisite for a wholesome reform in religion. What would his feelings have been if he had been permitted to witness, two centuries later, the great secession from the church of Rome, and to contemplate the effects of it on Christendom up to the nineteenth century? To see the continued errors, follies and corruptions in practice, the restraints still imposed by the Pope on the liberty of conscience, and his repression of intellectual advancement? Could the view have been consolatory, or made him other than unhappy?

It is Beatrice, the symbol of Christian philosophy, political and theological, who points out to Dante the throne prepared for Henry—

“ Dell' alto Arrigo, ch' a drizzare Italia  
Verrà in prima ch' ella sia disposta.” *Par. xxx. 137.*

It is she too, in this double character, who foretells that reform will be rejected in Italy as long as the evil days shall last, and a blind selfishness continue to fascinate the people.

“ La cieca cupidigia che v' ammalia,  
Simili fatti v' ha al fantolino  
Che muor di fame, e caccia via la balia.” *Par. xxx. 139.*

This discouraging prediction concludes the last address of Beatrice to Dante. We shall give it entire as we did the

parting address to him of Virgil. Dante relates that his vision displays to him the thrones of the blest arranged in the form of a white rose of infinite extent.

“ La vista mia nell’ ampio e nell’ altezza  
 Non si smarriva, ma tutto prendeva  
 Il quanto e’ l’ quale di quella allegrezza.  
 Presso e lontano lì nè pon nè leva :  
 Che dove Dio senza mezzo governa,  
 La legge natural nulla rilieva,  
 Nel giallo della rosa sempiterna  
 Che si dilata, rigrada, e ridole  
 Odor di lode al Sol che sempre verna,  
 Qual è colui che tace e dicer vuole,  
 Mi trasse Beatrice, e disse : ‘ Mira  
 Quanto è ’l convento delle bianche stole ;  
 Vedi nostra città quanto ella gira ;  
 Vedi li nostri scanni sì ripieni,  
 Che poca gente omai ci si disira.  
 In quel gran seggio, a che tu gli occhi tieni  
 Per la corona che già v’è su posta,  
 Prima che tu a queste nozze ceni,  
 Sederà l’ alma, che fia giù augosta,  
 Dell’ alto Arrigo, ch’ a drizzare Italia  
 Verrà in prima ch’ ella sia disposta.  
 La cieca cupidigia che v’ammalia,  
 Simili fatti v’ha al fantolino  
 Che muor di fame e caccia via la balia.’ ” *Par. xxx. 118.*

“ Nor amplitude  
 Nor height impeded, but my view with ease  
 Took in the full dimensions of that joy.  
 Near or remote, what there avails where God  
 Immediate rules, and Nature, awed, suspends  
 Her sway ? Into the yellow of the rose  
 Perennial, which in bright expansiveness,

Lays forth its gradual blooming, redolent  
 Of praises to the never wintering sun,  
 As one who fain would speak yet holds his peace,  
 Beatrice led me; and, 'Behold,' she said,  
 'This fair assemblage; stoles of snowy white,  
 How numberless. The city, where we dwell,  
 Behold how vast; and these our seats so throng'd,  
 Few now are wanting here. In that proud stall,  
 On which, the crown, already ere its state  
 Suspended, hold thine eyes—or ere thyself  
 Mayst at the wedding sup—shall rest the soul  
 Of the great Harry, he who, by the world  
 Augustus hail'd, to Italy must come,  
 Before her day be ripe, But ye are sick,  
 And in your tetchy wantonness as blind  
 As is the bantling that of hunger dies,  
 And drives away the nurse.'"

*Cary.*

The warning voice has ceased, and Dante delights his enraptured eye with gazing on the rose of celestial thrones, then turns to question Beatrice, but she has vanished, and in her place he sees a venerable old man who afterwards declares himself St. Bernard.

"In forma dunque di candida rosa  
 Mi si mostrava la milizia santa  
 Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.  
 O trina luce, che in unica stella  
 Scintillando a lor vista sì gli appaga,  
 Guarda quaggiuso alla nostra procella!" *Par. xxxi. 1 & 28.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"E quasi peregrin che si ricrea  
 Nel tempio del suo voto riguardando,  
 E spera già ridir com'egli stea,



Si per la viva luce passeggiando  
 Menava io gli occhi per li gradi  
 Mc u, mo giù, e mo ricirculando." *Par. xxxi. 43 \**.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 " La forma general di Paradiso." *Par. xxxi, 52-102.*

" So roved my ken, and in its general form  
 All Paradise survey'd : when round I turn'd  
 With purpose of my lady to inquire  
 Once more of things that held my thought suspense ;  
 But answer found from other than I ween'd :  
 For, Beatrice when I thought to see,  
 I saw instead a senior at my side,  
 Robed, as the rest, in glory. Joy benign  
 Glow'd in his eye, and o'er his cheek diffused,  
 With gestures such as spake a father's love.  
 And ' whither is she vanish'd ? ' straight I ask'd.  
 " ' By Beatrice summon'd,' he replied,  
 ' I come to aid thy wish. Looking aloft  
 To the third circle from the highest, there  
 Behold her on the throne, wherein her merit  
 Hath placed her.' Answering not, mine eyes I raised,  
 And saw her, where aloof she sat, her brow  
 A wreath reflecting of eternal beams.  
 Not from the centre of the sea so far  
 Unto the region of the highest thunder,  
 As was my ken from hers ; and yet the form  
 Came through that medium down, unmix'd and pure.  
 " ' O lady ! thou in whom my hopes have rest ;  
 Who, for my safety, hast not scorn'd in hell  
 To leave the traces of thy footsteps mark'd ;  
 For all mine eyes have seen, I, to thy power

---

\* These and many other extracts are given in this essay chiefly to bring the student acquainted with the beauties of Dante which too many imagine are to be found only in the Inferno.

And goodness, virtue owe and grace. Of slave  
 Thou hast to freedom brought me ; and no means,  
 For my deliverance apt, hast left untried.  
 Thy liberal bounty still toward me keep :  
 That, when my spirit, which thou madest whole,  
 Is loosen'd from this body, it may find  
 Favour with thee.' So I my suit preferr'd :  
 And she, so distant, as appear'd, look'd down,  
 And smiled ; then towards the eternal fountain turn'd.  
 " And thus the senior, holy and revered :  
 ' That thou at length mayst happily conclude  
 Thy voyage (to which end I was despatch'd,  
 By supplication moved and holy love)  
 Let thy upsoaring vision range, at large,  
 This garden through : for so, by ray divine  
 Kindled, thy ken a higher flight shall mount ;  
 And from heaven's queen, whom fervent I adore,  
 All gracious aid befriend us ; for that I  
 Am her own faithful Bernard.' " \* Cary

St. Bernard again points to Beatrice in the celestial rose, seated side by side with Rachel, each of them having a real and a symbolical character, the first love of the poet seated with the first love of Jacob, Theology associated with Contemplation.

" Affetto al suo piacer quel contemplante  
 Libero officio di dottore assunse,  
 E cominciò queste parole sante :  
 ' La piaga che Maria richiuse ed unse,  
 Quella ch' è tanto bella da' suoi piedi

---

\* St. Bernard born 1090, Abbot of Clairvaux, called by Dante *Il contemplante*, also *Il fidele di Maria Virgine* ; yet he vigorously opposed the doctrine and the new festival of the Immaculate Conception. The last of the Fathers of the church. Died 1153, aged 63.



È colei che l'aperse e che la punse.

Nell'ordine che fanno i terzi sedi,  
Siede Rachele di sotto da costei,  
Con Beatrice, sì come tu vedi.'''

*Par. xxxii. 1.*

"Gazing on her whose Son brought peace to man,  
That saint contemplative instruction sweet  
Pour'd forth, and thus in holy words began :  
'The ancient wound that Mary closed and heal'd \*,  
She † open'd, who is sitting at her feet,  
In form of perfect loveliness reveal'd.  
Beneath her, ranking in the third degree,  
Is Rachel seated there ; and at her side  
Is Beatrice, as thou mayst clearly see.'"

*Wright.*

Dante has thus exalted his Beatrice to the highest point of glory that a Christian poet's fancy could conceive ; and it must be admitted that his sublime vision has nobly redeemed the promise with which he concludes the *Vita Nuova* : "That if it should be the pleasure of Him from whom all things live, that his life should be prolonged some years, he hoped to say of that lady what never had been said of any one."

St. Bernard is the third and last of Dante's attendants in his mystic journey, and like the last hierophant in the Ancient Mysteries, whose office was to perfect the initiation and lead the aspirant to the presence of the summum arcanum—the mystery of mysteries, his office is the same. We shall return to him, and remark on the conclusion of the *Commedia*; but have first a few observations to make on Dante's visit to the heaven of the sun.

In the tenth canto of the *Paradiso*, Dante finds himself

\* Original sin.

† Eve.

transported, unconsciously, with Beatrice, from the third to the fourth heaven, the sphere of the sun :—

“ Lo ministro maggior della natura,  
Che del valor del cielo il mondo imprenta,  
E col suo lume il tempo ne misura.” *Par. x. 28.*

“ The great minister  
Of nature, that upon the world imprints  
The virtue of the heaven ; and doles out  
Time for us with his beam.” *Cary.*

On this glorious planet Landino thus expatiates :—

“ Il Sole è maggiore di tutti gli altri pianeti in qualità, in dignità, ed in potenza. È la virtù vivificativa, laonde niuna cosa vive dove non penetra la virtù del Sole. È l'occhio del mondo, giocondità del dì, bellezza del cielo, misura de' tempi, virtù e vigore di tutte le cose nascenti, signore dei pianeti, perfezion delle stelle, e rè della natura. Il Sole influisce nell' uomo natura di sapere e d' immaginare ; la qual cosa ha mosso il poeta ch' egli induca nel corpo di questo pianeta uomini eccellenti in dottrina.”

Dante says :—

“ Quel che era dentro al Sol dov' io entrami,  
Perch' io lo 'ngegno, e l'arte, e l' uso chiami,  
Sì nol direi, che mai s' immaginasse ;  
Ma creder puossi, e di veder si brami.” *Par. x. 41.*

“ To tell what forms I saw within the sun,  
Though art, use, genius should my pen inspire,  
So that the mind may see them, must be vain ;  
Yet Faith may trust the sight, and Hope desire.” *W. and L.*

“ Io vidi più fulgor' vivi e vincenti  
Far di noi centro, e di sè far corona,  
Più dolci in voce che 'n vista lucenti.  
Così cinger la figlia di Latona  
Vedem tal volta, quando l' aere è pregno  
Sì che ritenga il fil che fa la zona.

Nella corte del ciel, ond' io rivegno,  
 Si truovan molte gioje care e belle  
 Tanto che non si posson trar del regno.

E 'l canto di que' lumi era di quelle :  
 ' Chi non s' impenna sì che lassù voli,  
 Dal muto aspetti quindi le novelle.'

Poi si cantando quegli ardenti Soli  
 Si fur' girati intorno a noi tre volte  
 Come stelle vicine a fermi poli."

*Par. x. 64.*

" Then saw I a bright band, in liveliness  
 Surpassing, who themselves did make the crown,  
 And us their centre : yet more sweet in voice,  
 Than, in their visage, beaming. Cinctured thus,  
 Sometime Latona's daughter we behold,  
 When the impregnate air retains the thread  
 That weaves her zone. In the celestial court,  
 Whence I return, are many jewels found,  
 So dear and beautiful, they cannot brook  
 Transporting from that realm : and of these lights  
 Such was the song. ' Who doth not prune his wing  
 To soar up thither, let him look from thence  
 For tidings from the dumb.' And singing thus  
 Those beaming suns revolved around us thrice,  
 As nearest stars around the fixed pole."

*Ca. y.*

One of these luminaries of overpowering splendor, which  
 formed the wreath, is the renowned Schoolman, St. Thomas  
 Aquinas, surnamed the angelic doctor, a monk of the order  
 of St. Dominic, who thus addresses Dante :—

" Tu voi saper di quai piante s' infiora  
 Questa ghirlanda, che intorno vagheggia  
 La bella donna ch'al ciel t'avvalora :  
 Io fui degli agni della santa greggia  
 Che Domenico mena per cammino,  
 E ben s' impingua se non si vaneggia.



Questi, che m'è a destra più vicino,  
 Frate e maestro fummi ; ed esso Alberto  
 E' di Colonia, ed io Thomas d' Aquino." *Par. x. 91.*

"Thou fain wouldst hear, what plants are these, that bloom  
 In the bright garland, which, admiring, girds  
 This fair dame round, who strengthens thee for heaven.  
 I, then, was of the lambs, that Dominic  
 Leads, for his saintly flock, along the way  
 Where well they thrive, not swoln with vanity.  
 He nearest on my right hand, brother was  
 And master to me ; Albert of Cologne  
 Is he, and Thomas of Aquinum I." *Cary.*

St. Thomas enumerates and particularizes the eleven illustrious theologians who, together with himself, compose the garland. He then pauses, and the heavenly choir renews its movement and its song, delighting the eye and ear, the only organs of sense which are required in Paradise.

"Così vid' io la gloriosa ruota  
 Muoversi ; e render voce a voce in tempra  
 Ed in dolcezza ch'esser non può nota  
 Se non colà dove'l gioir s' insempra." *Par. x. 145.*

"Then saw I move the glorious ring ; then heard  
 Voice answering voice, so musical and soft,  
 It can be known but where is endless joy."

In the following Canto St. Thomas resumes his discourse, and delivers an eulogium on St. Francis\*, the contemporary and friend of St. Dominic†, and like him the founder of an order of mendicant Friars bearing his name.

"Poi che ciascuno fu tornato ne lo  
 Punto del cerchio in che avanti s'era,

\* St. Francis died 1226, aged 45.

† St. Dominic died 1223, aged 53.

Fermossi come a candellier candelò :

Ed io senti' dentro a quella lumiera,  
Che pria m' avea parlato, sorridendo  
Incominciar, facendosi più mera."

*Par.* xi. 13.

" When in the circle to that point return'd  
Was each one, where it erst had been, and firm  
Remain'd as torch upon its stand, then I  
Within that light that had before address'd me  
(Smiling and more resplendent now), thus heard  
The voice begin.

" La providenza che governa il mondo." *Par.* xi. 28—121.

" The providence that governeth the world,  
In depth of counsel by created ken  
Unfathomable, to the end that she\*,  
Who with loud cries was spoused in precious blood,  
Might keep her footing towards her well-beloved,  
Safe in herself and constant unto him,  
Hath two ordain'd, who should on either hand  
In chief escort her : one†, seraphic all  
In fervency ; for wisdom upon earth,  
The other‡, splendour of cherubic light.  
I but of one will tell : he tells of both,  
Who one commendeth, which of them soe'er  
Be taken : for their deeds were to one end.

" Between Tapino, and the wave that falls  
From blest Ubaldo's hill, Ascesi§ lies ;  
And there a sun upon the world arose,  
And was not yet much distant from his rising  
When his good influence 'gan to bless the earth.  
A dame||, to whom none openeth pleasure's gate  
More than to death, was, 'gainst his father's will,  
His stripling choice : and he did make her his,

---

\* The Church.

† St. Francis.

‡ St. Dominic.

§ Assisi.

|| Poverty.

Before the spiritual court, by nuptial bonds,  
 And in his father's sight : from day to day,  
 Then loved her more devoutly. She, bereaved  
 Of her first husband, slighted and obscure,  
 Thousand and hundred years and more, remain'd  
 Without a single suitor, till he came."

\* \* \* \* \*

" But not to deal

Thus closely with thee longer, take at large  
 The lovers' titles—Poverty and Francis.  
 Their concord and glad looks, wonder and love,  
 And sweet regard gave birth to holy thoughts,  
 So much, that venerable Bernard \* first  
 Did bare his feet, and, in pursuit of peace  
 So heavenly ran, yet deem'd his footing slow.  
 O hidden riches ! O prolific good !  
 Egidius bares him next, and next Sylvester,  
 And follow, both, the bridegroom ; so the bride  
 Can please them. Thenceforth goes he on his way,  
 The father and the master, with his spouse,  
 And with that family, whom now the cord †  
 Girt humbly."

\* \* \* \* \*

" On the hard rock,

"Twixt Arno and the Tyber, he from Christ  
 Took the last signet ‡, which his limbs two years  
 Did carry. Then, the season come that he,  
 Who to such good had destined him, was pleased  
 To advance him to the meed, which he had earn'd  
 By his self-humbling ; to his brotherhood,  
 As their just heritage, he gave in charge  
 His dearest lady ; and enjoin'd their love

\* Bernard of Quintavalle.

† Hence called Cordeliers.

‡ The stigmata, or marks of the wounds of our Saviour in hands, feet, and side.

And faith to her ; and, from her bosom, will'd  
 His goodly spirit should move forth, returning  
 To its appointed kingdom ; nor would have  
 His body laid upon another bier.  
 " Think now of one, who were a fit colleague  
 To keep the bark of Peter, in deep sea,  
 Helm'd to right point ; and such our Patriarch was."\*

*Cary.*

St. Thomas finishes his discourse with complaining of the degeneracy of the Dominicans of that day (1300); but allows, sarcastically, that there are still some few who adhere to the rule of their founder.

" Ben son di quelle che temono 'l danno,  
 E stringonsi al pastor ; ma son sì poche,  
 Che le cappe fornisce poco panno." *Par. xi. 130.*

" There are of them, in sooth, who fear their harm,  
 And to the shepherd cleave ; but these so few,  
 A little stuff may furnish out their cloaks." *Cary.*

The words of St. Thomas are scarcely ended when a second circle of twelve luminaries encompasses the first, while Dante and Beatrice still remain in the centre. The description is in the highest degree poetical—

" Sì tosto come l' ultima parola." *Par. xii. 1—30.*

" Soon as its final word the blessed flame  
 Had raised for utterance, straight the holy ring  
 Began to wheel ; nor yet had once revolved,  
 Or ere another, circling, compass'd it,  
 Motion to motion, song to song, conjoining ;  
 Song, that as much our muses doth excel,  
 Our sirens with their tuneful pipes, as ray  
 Of primal splendor doth its faint reflex.  
 " As when, if Juno bid her handmaid† forth,

---

\* St. Dominic.

† Iris.

Two arches of like hue and parallel  
 Span the thin cloud, the outer taking birth  
 From that within (like to that maiden's voice\*  
 Whom love did melt away, as sun the mist),  
 And they who gaze, presageful call to mind  
 The compact made with Noah, of the world  
 No more to be o'erflow'd; about us thus,  
 Of sempiternal roses, bending, wreathed  
 Those garlands twain; and to the innermost  
 Ev'n thus the external answer'd. When the dance,  
 And other great festivity of song,  
 And radiance, light with light, jocund and bland,  
 With one consent were in a moment still,  
 (Ev'n as the eyes by one volition moved,  
 Open and close together), from the heart  
 Of one amongst the new lights moved a voice  
 That made me turn like needle to the star." *Cary.*

The voice is that of St. Bonaventura, another of the most renowned of the schoolmen, and surnamed the seraphic doctor, a monk of the order of St. Francis, who proceeds to repay the courtesy of St. Thomas Aquinas by an eulogium on St. Dominic.

"E cominciò: 'L'amor che mi fa bella.'" *Par. xii. 31.*

"He thus began: 'The love that makes my beauty  
 Prompts me to tell of the other guide, for whom  
 Such good of mine is spoken. Where one is,  
 The other worthily should also be;  
 That as their warfare was alike, alike  
 Should be their glory. Slow, and full of doubt,  
 And with thin ranks, after its banner moved  
 The army of Christ (which it so dearly cost  
 To reappoint), when its imperial Head,  
 Who reigneth ever, for the drooping host

---

\* Echo.

Did make provision, thorough grace alone,  
 And not through its deserving. As thou heardst,  
 Two champions to the succour of his spouse  
 He sent, who by their deeds and words might join  
 Again his scatter'd people. In that clime  
 Where springs the pleasant west-wind to unfold  
 The fresh leaves, with which Europe sees herself  
 New garmented; nor from those billows far,  
 Beyond whose chiding, after weary course,  
 The sun doth sometime hide him; safe abides  
 The happy Callaroga, under guard  
 Of the great shield, wherein the lion lies  
 Subjected and supreme\*. And there was born  
 The loving minion of the Christian faith,  
 The hallow'd wrestler, gentle to his own,  
 And to his enemies terrible."

Cary.

"Domenico fu detto: ed io ne parlo  
 Sì come dell' agricola che Cristo  
 Elesse all' orto suo per ajutarlo.

Ben parve messo e famigliar di Cristo,  
 Che'l primo amor che'n lui fu manifesto  
 Fu al primo consiglio che diè Cristo." † *Par. xii. 70.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"Non dispensare o due o tre per sei,  
 Non la fortuna di primo vacante,  
*Non decimas, quæ sunt pauperum Dei,*  
 Addimandò; ma contra 'l mondo errante  
 Licenzia di combatter per lo seme  
 Del qual ti fascian ventiquattro piante.

Poi con dottrina e con volere insieme,  
 Con l' ufficio apostolico si mosse,  
 Quasi torrente ch' alta vena preme:

---

\* See the Armorial Bearing of Castile.

† Observe, that Cristo is made to rhyme only with itself by Dante.  
 See *Par. xii. xiv. xix. xxxii.*

E negli sterpi eretici percosse  
L'impeto suo più vivamente quivi  
Dove le resistenze eran più grosse.

Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi  
Onde l'orto cattolico si riga  
Sì che i suoi arbuscelli stan più vivi.

Se tal fu l'una ruota della biga  
In che la santa Chiesa si difese  
E vinse in campo la sua civil briga,

Ben ti dovrebbe assai esser palese  
L'eccellenza dell'altra, di cui Tomma  
Dinanzi al mio venir fu sì cortese."

*Par. xii. 91.*

" They named him Dominic,  
And I speak of him, as the labourer,  
Whom Christ in his own garden chose to be  
His helpmate. Messenger he seem'd, and friend  
Fast kuit to Christ; and the first love he show'd  
Was after the first counsel that Christ gave."\*

\* \* \* \* \*

" He besought  
No dispensation for commuted wrong,  
Nor the first vacant fortune, nor the tenths  
That to God's paupers rightly appertain,  
But, 'gainst an erring and degenerate world,  
License to fight, in favour of that seed  
From which the twice twelve scions gird thee round.  
Then, with sage doctrine and good will to help,  
Forth on his great apostleship he fared,  
Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein;  
And, dashing 'gainst the stocks of heresy,  
Smote fiercest, where resistance was most stout.  
Thence many rivulets have since been turn'd,  
Over the garden catholic to lead  
Their living waters, and have fed its plants.

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\* Matth. xix. 21. Vade, vende quæ habes, et da pauperibus.



If such, one wheel of that two-yoked car,  
 Wherein the holy church defended her,  
 And rode triumphant through the civil broil;  
 Thou canst not doubt its fellow's excellence,  
 Which Thomas, ere my coming, hath declared  
 So courteously unto thee."

Cary.

St. Bonaventura enumerates the eleven spirits who together with himself compose the garland, declares who he is, and finishes his oration.

"Io son la vita di Bonaventura  
 Da Bagnoregio, che ne' grandi ufici  
 Sempre posposi la sinistra cura." *Par. xii. 127.*

• • • • •  
 "Ad invegliar cotanto paladino  
 Mi mosse la infiammata cortesia  
 Di Fra Tommaso, e' l discreto latino,  
 E mosse meco questa compagnia." *Par. xii. 142.*

"Bonaventura's life am I, and was  
 Of Bagnoregio; one who in discharge  
 Of my great offices still laid aside  
 All sinister aim."

• • • • •  
 "The ardent courtesy  
 Of Friar Thomas, and his fair discourse,  
 Have moved me to extol a paladin  
 So valorous, and with me moved this choir."

St. Bonaventura has here declared himself the Coryphæus of the outer wreath, and St. Thomas must be understood to be so of the inner, and each to speak the sentiments of all in delivering his own.

"E sonar nella voce ed io e mio  
 Quand era nel concetto noi e nostro." *Par. xix. 11.*

The joyful movement is again renewed, accompanied with



a hymn in honour of the Trinity. Again the carol ceases, and St. Thomas resumes his discourse, and enters upon the depths of theology.

“ Li si cantò non Bacco, non Peana,  
Ma tre Persone in divina natura,  
Ed in una persona essa e l' umana.  
Compiè 'l cantare e 'l volger sua misura,  
E attesersi a noi que' santi lumi,  
Felicitando sè di cura in cura.  
Ruppe 'l silenzio ne' concordi numi  
Poscia la luce in che mirabil vita  
Del proverel di Dio narrata fumi.”

*Par. xiii. 25.*

“ There was sung  
No Bacchus, and no Io Pæan, but  
Three Persons in the Godhead, and in one  
Person that nature and the human join'd.  
The song fulfill'd its measure ; and to us  
Those saintly lights attended, happier made  
At each new ministering. Then silence brake,  
Amid the accordant sons of Deity,  
That luminary, in which the wondrous life  
Of the meek man of God was told to me.”

*Cary.*

We must again remark that it is in the most luminous of the heavens that Dante has placed these eminent divines. The brightest among them, and which shines in the inner circle like the chief star in Ariadne's crown, is Solomon, who might be thus honoured in deference to the interpretation which the church has put upon his beautiful idyl, “The Canticle of Canticles ;” but Dante, the satirist as well as theologian, assigns another reason.

“ Se drizzi gli occhi chiari  
Vedrai aver solamente rispetto  
Ai Regi, che son molti, e i buon son rari.” *Par. xiii. 106.*



“Non ho parlato sì che tu non posse  
Ben veder ch’el fu Rè che chiese senno,  
Acciocchè Re sufficiente fosse.” *Par. xiii. 94.*

In the outer circle a similar place is occupied by Nathan the prophet, whose claim to it would be granted if he had no other than his severe reprimand of a tyrant in the memorable parable of Uriah’s lamb. But the whole four-and-twenty names, and the periods at which they flourished, deserve attention.

<i>The Inner Wreath.</i>		<i>The Outer Wreath.</i>	
<i>Par. x.</i>		<i>Par. xii.</i>	
Thomas Aquinas .....	D 1274	Bonaventura.....	D 1274
Albert of Cologne .....	D 1280	Illuminato .....	Fl 1200
Gratian .....	Fl 1150	Agostino ..	Fl 1200
Pietro Lombardo .....	D 1160	Hugues of St. Victor .....	D 1142
Solomon .....	Fl. A.C 1000	Pietro Mangiadore .....	D 1198
St. Dionigi .....	D 95	Pietro Hispano .....	D 1277
Paulus Orosius .....	Fl 425	Nathan the Prophet	Fl. A.C 1000
Boetius .....	D 524	Chrysostom .....	D 407
Isidore.....	D 625	Anselm .....	D 1109
Bede .....	D 735	Donatus .....	Fl 350
Richard of St. Victor .	D 1173	Raban .....	Fl 850
Sigebert .....	Fl 1100	Joachim .....	Fl 1150

In this list we gladly see our Anselm and the venerable Bede. The writings of both are still esteemed; and the former must ever be honoured in English history for the firm and temperate stand which he made, when he held the see of Canterbury, against the tyranny and spoliation of William Rufus. We see St. Chrysostom, Boetius and others who flourished long antecedent to the era of the Schoolmen, and among these some very distinguished names omitted, as Abelard, Raymond Lullus, Duns Scotus, and Occam, who were

either pronounced unorthodox, or with whose doctrines Dante did not sympathise. We may consider the list as comprehending a favourite apocalyptic number of witnesses and champions of the faith, whom Dante especially revered, and whose separate merits he represents collectively in the persons of Bonaventura and Aquinas. These two illustrious men held the highest place in his veneration. They were perfect followers of their masters, St. Francis and St. Dominic, in their virtues, and exempt from their faults—the extreme asceticism of the former and the furious zeal of the latter, both of them being as distinguished for mildness in polemics as for fervour and power. In their character as divines they bear a resemblance to Aristotle and Plato, who stand first and second in Dante's regard as philosophers; and his preference to Aquinas, as the Aristotle of schoolmen, "*Il maestro di color che sanno*," is conspicuous, and the "*Summa Theologiæ*" is treated by him as the great bulwark of the dogmas of Christianity, and the "*Itinerarium Mentis*" as only second to it, and the most powerful persuasive to follow its precepts.

The last words of Aquinas to Dante are an admonition to think humbly, and to judge charitably, of a neighbour whose virtue and faith may be doubtful, and to remember that the wicked may repent and become righteous, that the saint may stumble, and that the elect are known to One only.

“Non sien le genti ancor troppo sicure  
 A giudicar, sì come quei che stima  
 Le biade in campo pria che sien mature :  
 Ch'io ho veduto tutto 'l verno prima  
 Il prun mostrarsi rigido e feroce,  
 Poscia portar la rosa in su la cima :



E legno vidi già dritto e veloce  
 Correr lo mar per tutto suo cammino,  
 Perire al fine all' entrar della foce.

Non creda monna Berta e ser Martino,  
 Per vedere un furare, altro offerere,  
 Vedergli dentro al consiglio divino :  
 Che quel può surger, e quel può cadere." *Par. xiii. 130.*

" Let not the people be too swift to judge ;  
 As one who reckons on the blades in the field,  
 Or e'er the crop be ripe. For I have seen  
 The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,  
 And after bear the rose upon its top ;  
 And bark, that all her way across the sea  
 Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last  
 E'en in the haven's mouth. Seeing one steal,  
 Another bring his offering to the priest,  
 Let not Dame Birtha and Sir Martin thence  
 Into Heaven's counsels deem that they can pry :  
 For one of these may rise, the other fall." *Cary.*

When the final words are uttered, and Beatrice and Dante are still in the centre of the wreath of sempiternal roses, Dante, by an ingenious simile, identifies Aquinas and Beatrice ; the theology of the *Angel* of the Schools with that of the *Commedia* ; the creed of Dante with that of the church of Rome, in a liberal and honest sense though not in every particular.

" Dal centro al cerchio e sì dal cerchio al centro  
 Muovesi l' acqua in un ritondo vaso,  
 Secondo ch' è percossa fuori o dentro.

Nella mia mente fè subito caso  
 Questo ch' io dico, sì come si tacque  
 La gloriosa vita di Tommaso,  
 Per la similitudine che nacque  
 Del suo parlare e di quel di Beatrice." *Par. xiv. 1.*

" From centre to the circle, and so back  
 From circle to the centre, water moves  
 In the round chalice, even as the blow  
 Impels it, inwardly, or from without.  
 Such was the image glanced into my mind,  
 As the great spirit of Aquinum ceased  
 From likeness of the interchanged discourse  
 Of him and Beatrice." *Cary and L.*

We shall hereafter advert to this favourite allegory of Dante, which represents the beauty of Christian theology under the poetical image of his first love ; but the Beatrice of the *Commedia* is understood by the illustrious German critic, A. W. Schlegel, so precisely as by ourselves, that we have pride in taking this occasion of giving his sentiments as our own, and in his elegant language.

" Le moyen-âge avait un goût dominant pour l'allégorie. Plus tard on la voit encore figurer dans la peinture, et la poésie dramatique a commencé par elle. La personnification d'une idée générale ou abstraite n'a rien d'équivoque ; mais en poésie, malgré sa clarté, elle est toujours un peu froide. Pour qu'on croie à la réalité d'un être idéal, il faut qu'il prenne des traits individuels ; c'est ce qui est arrivé dans la mythologie. La plupart des divinités de la Grèce étaient primitivement des symboles des puissances naturelles ou des facultés de l'ame ; mais ce n'étaient pas des personnifications inventées express par la réflexion ; c'étaient plutôt les créations spontanées d'une imagination jeune, pour laquelle tout était animé dans la nature. En suite la tradition fit l'histoire de ces divinités, et par là les transforma en individus. De même Dante, dans ses personnifications, a tellement fondu ensemble la partie idéale et le caractère individuel, qu'il n'est plus possible de les séparer. Le voyageur qui traverse les trois régions où les ames séjournent selon leur état moral est l'homme naturel ; mais c'est aussi lui, le poète, Dante Alighieri, avec toutes ses particularités biographiques. Virgile figure la raison non éclairée



par la révélation ; mais c'est aussi le poète latin que tout le moyen-âge a vénéré comme un grand sage. Béatrice représente la science des choses divines ; mais c'est aussi Béatrice Portinari, dont la chaste beauté avait fait sur Dante, dès sa première jeunesse, une impression profonde. Qu'y a-t-il donc de si inconcevable dans cette combinaison ? Le beau est un reflet des perfections divines dans le monde visible, et, selon la fiction platonique, une admiration pure fait pousser les ailes dont l'âme a besoin pour s'élever vers les régions célestes \*."

We have analysed the poet's Vision of the fourth heaven the more fully as it is the last argument we shall oppose to the insinuation of Foscolo,—that the apparent catholicism of Dante is but a pretence, and that his real object was the introduction of a new and philosophic school of religion. "The wish, we fear, was father to the thought." To us it seems impossible that the charge should be true, or that Dante should have composed the above fictions with any other intention than to show respect to the dogmas of the Church, to signify his adherence to them, and to celebrate the great authorities by whom they had been best defended.

A critic of Foscolo's religious opinions, on observing the unscrupulous satire directed by Dante against the head of the Catholic Church, would be disposed to hail him as a brother ; and if he possessed the ingenuity of Foscolo, could easily give an interpretation to the allegories of a poem like the *Commedia* which should be hostile, not merely to Papacy but to Revelation. It would be still easier if the theory were confirmed of

\* Sur Dante, Pétrarque et Boccace, par A. W. Schlegel.—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 Aout 1836.

the existence of a secret sect, a conventional language, and a gergo, every word of which is robed in a double sense,

“ O in eterno faticoso manto ! ” *Inf.* xxiii. 67.

But it is only the superficial reader that can be deceived. Our endeavour has been to guard the student against assenting inconsiderately to these modern paradoxes, and from being misled by sophisms which tend to dishonour the greatest of poets,

“ Che sovra gli altri com’ aquila vola.” *Inf.* iv. 96.

for if the design and artifice which is insinuated against the author of the Divine Comedy could be proved, the hypocrisy and impiety of his work would be so monstrous, that all its learning, and historical and poetic merit, would not save it from the disgust and aversion of every right-minded Christian.

It is not to be disputed that Dante, and many of the most intellectual Catholics of his time, harboured strong Protestant feelings. With such corruptions and abuses before their eyes, it could not be otherwise. Dante’s bold project of reform is before us ; which, if effected, he fondly hoped would be complete and final, and restore the Catholic Church to purity, and make her for ever

“ A milk-white hind immortal and unchanged.”

We have seen, and with regret, his Ghibelline hate get the mastery of his duty and discretion, and provoke him to draw an unbecoming parallel between his enemy, Pope Boniface VIII., and the “ Mystery of Iniquity.” An anti-papal spirit,



in a certain sense, is undeniable in the *Commedia*; but its Catholic spirit remains untainted. In the words of Schlegel,

“ On peut attribuer à Dante *un esprit antipapal* dans le sens que nous venons d'indiquer ; mais si on entend par là le rejet d'une autorité centrale et suprême dans l'église, et le désir de renverser le saint-siège, rien n'étoit plus éloigné de sa pensée \*.”

The *Commedia* announces to the Protestant, in every page, that there is an impassable barrier between him and the theology of Dante,—

“ Fra Beatrice e te è questo muro.” *Purg.* xxvii. 36.

Monastic institutions are evidently approved. The sign of the cross, pilgrimages, and the veneration of relics are treated as innocent, if not as useful superstitions ; nor would he have admitted that the kneeling before the crucifix, or an image of the Virgin, with a rosary in the hand, and repeating the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo, could be censured as idolatrous ; but we feel sure that there were practical falsities and absurdities in the Romanism of his day which he condemned in his heart as much as the Protestant does now, but could not openly expose. Two of the most glaring of these, Indulgences and Canonization, may be meant to be included in St. Peter's reprobation of

“ I privilegi venduti e mendaci.” *Par.* xxvii. 53.

But to dispute the prerogative of the keys on this point, in 1300, would have brought certain destruction on the head of the offender, and have been mischievous in only disturbing

\* Revue des Deux Mondes, 15 Aout 1836.



without correcting the popular credulity. Amidst Dante's unbridled satire some signs of prudent fear are visible. The horrid crusade against the Albigenses is only darkly hinted, where St. Peter says,—

“ Non fu nostra intenzione  
Che le chiavi che mi fur' concesse  
Divenisser segnacolo in vessillo  
Che contra i battezzati combattesse.” *Par.* xxvii. 49.

He notices but once the iniquitous destruction of the Knights Templars (1307), and conveys his opinion but obscurely that it sprung solely from the covetousness of Philip IV., “*Quel feroce drudo*,” in connivance with his vicious paramour, Pope Clement V., “*La puttana sciolta*” (*Purg.* xxxii. 149).

“ Veggio 'l nuovo Pilato sì crudele  
Che ciò nol sazia, ma senza decreto,  
Porta nel Tempio le cupide vele.” *Purg.* xx. 91.

To have inveighed openly against these two transactions, so disgraceful to humanity and to the Church, he probably knew was more than the Inquisition would bear; a court which he could not but dread, and by whose sentence he would infallibly have suffered if he had survived but six more years; for it cannot be supposed that the tribunal which burnt Cecco d'Ascoli\* alive (1327), for the obscure heresies in his poem of the *Acerba*, would at the same time have permitted the author of the *Commedia* to go unmolested.

As to Indulgences, Dante could not have thought differently of them in the thirteenth century from Sismondi in the nineteenth, who puts this question,—

\* Tiraboschi, Storia. Vol. v. lib. 2. p. 206.



“ Lorsqu’on voit deux cents jours d’indulgences promis par le Pape pour chaque baiser donné à la croix qui s’élève au milieu du Colisée ; lorsqu’on voit dans toutes les églises d’Italie tant d’indulgences plenières si faciles à gagner ; comment concilier aucun principe de moralité avec le pardon accordé ? ” \*

The question is replied to by Manzoni †, and very unsatisfactorily, as might be expected, the practice being an abuse that cannot be defended. The assumption that a mere man, because he is raised to the Popedom, can determine whether a soul shall be admitted to Purgatory or not, and if admitted, that he shall be able at pleasure to diminish the duration of its penance, is too great an absurdity to admit of argument. Dante passes it by in silence, subscribing perhaps to the dictum of St. Augustine ;

“ Multa esse vera quæ vulgo scire non sit utile ; multaque, quæ tametsi falsa sint, aliter existimare populum expediat ‡. ”

Canonization is another of the abuses, “ *I privilegi venduti e mendaci*, ” on which Dante observes the same prudent reserve, and perhaps for the same reasons. He has virtually denied the papal power both of purgatorial indulgences and of canonization, in that single line in which the celestial eagle declares to him that the angels themselves know not who are destined to heaven,—

“ Non conosciamo ancor tutti gli eletti. ” *Par. xx. 135.*

\* Hist. des Repub. Italiennes, chap. 127.

† Sulla Morale Cattolica, cap. xi.

‡ Quoted by Warburton. Div. Leg. b. 3. sec. 2. vol. 1. p. 309. Ed. 1738.

The Saints admitted into the calendar of the Roman ritual are persons generally whose acknowledged sanctity of life and truly christian character afford a strong presumption of their exaltation to heaven ; and the service appointed for the festival of a saint is little more than a commemoration of his virtues, and might be deemed unobjectionable if it were not invariably contaminated by the assertion of pretended miracles which we know to be fabrications of fraud and falsity.

Look at the service in the "Breviarium Romanum" appointed for the festival of St. Francis (Oct. 4), in which the miracle of the "*Stigmata*" is thus recorded :—

"Se in solitudinem montis Alverni contulit : ubi quadraginta diebus, propter honorem sancti Michaelis Archangeli, in jejunio et oratione consumptis, festo die Exaltationis sanctæ Crucis ei Seraphim Crucifixi effigiem inter alas continens, apparuit : qui ejus et manibus et pedibus et lateri vestigia clavorum impressit."

Look also at the service appointed for the festival of St. Dominic (Aug. 4), where it is recorded that he raised three persons from the dead, and performed many other miracles.

"Hujus autem ingenium ac virtus maxime enituit in evertendis hereticis, qui perniciosis erroribus Tolosates pervertere conabantur. Quo in negotio septem consumpsit annos. Tres etiam mortuos ad vitam revocavit, multaque alia edidit miracula, quibus Ordo Prædicatorum mirificè propagari cœpit."

To most readers it will, at first, seem extraordinary that Dante should have selected these two saints for his particular commendation : we are so accustomed to consider St. Francis merely as the meek, contemplative enthusiast, and St. Dominic as the furious zealot and exterminator of the Albigenses,



we almost incline to despise the first, and we can think of the last only with unmingled aversion. The magic art of the painter has imprinted St. Francis on our mind, "*il poverello di Dio*," his countenance thin, pale, and penetrating, "with eyes upraised as one inspired;" his hands crossed upon his breast, and marked with wounds like those made by the spear and the nails at the crucifixion. History has as indelibly pictured St. Dominic; "*P atleta ai nimici crudo*," the searching, unfeeling, unsparing Inquisitor, so faithfully portrayed by the sculptor in St. Peter's; where he frowns terrifically, with his appropriate emblem at his side, a bloodhound with a lighted torch in his mouth\*. St. Dominic's rule of conduct was the very opposite to the christian precept "Love your enemies," and his being elevated to a place in the Canon of the Mass should outrage the feelings of every Romanist. How then shall we excuse the liberal, the tolerant Dante, for honouring him thus highly?—Dante, who has made St. Peter condemn all crusades against the baptised?

"No purpose was of ours that the keys  
Which were vouchsafed me should for ensign serve  
Unto the banners, that do levy war  
On the baptised." Par. xxvii.

He might be excused, we think, on account of the peril in which his anti-papal satire had placed him, and from a natural

\* The statue is by Le Gros. The emblem records a dream of his mother in pregnancy; interpreted by the Catholic as prophetic of the fidelity, ardour, and eloquence of St. Dominic; by the Protestant, as figurative of his hunting down the unfortunate heretics and burning them at the stake.

and reasonable fear of the Inquisition. The judges of that court were almost universally Dominicans, and his eulogy of their founder may possibly have been intended for a soothing bribe thrown by him to the dreaded Cerberus.

" Melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam  
Objecit."

*Æn.* vi. 420.

The merits of the two saints however were substantial, and important to the Church of Rome, and Dante might reasonably extol the high qualities of both. Pride, pomp and luxury were the glaring sins of the priesthood\*, and these, the example set by the Franciscans of humility, poverty and resignation, was well calculated to shame and correct.

The heresy of the Albigenses, under various names, was spreading far and wide; it renounced papal supremacy and endangered the established Church, and therefore called for legitimate opposition. The institution of the Dominicans, or Order of Preachers, was admirably calculated to meet the necessity, and Dante, who never shrunk from wielding the " sword of the mouth " against error, and who wished for the correction but not the overthrow of papacy, might on that

\* In 1254 Pope Innocent IV. issued a bull in which his eloquent invective recalls, and may excuse, the severest words of Dante against the abuses and scandals of the priests in his time :—

" Nos hommes d'Eglise, montés sur des chevaux superbes, vêtues de pourpre, couverts de pierreries, d'or et de soie, réfléchissant dans leur parure les rayons du soleil scandalisé, vont promener partout le spectacle de leur orgueil; ils font voir en leur personne, au lieu des vicaires du Christ, des héritiers de Lucifer, et provoquent la colère du peuple non seulement contre eux-mêmes, mais contre l'autorité sacrée dont ils sont les indignes représentants."—*Ozanam*, p. 357.



account justly honour its founder, at the same time that he secretly abhorred his intolerance and cruelty.

M. Ozanam\*, a zealous Catholic, after a thorough investigation of the philosophical opinions of Dante, mystical, dogmatical, rational, eclectic and empirical, and anxious to prove his orthodoxy, has not overlooked this eulogium of St. Dominic as favouring his argument. We shall give a few extracts in his own words:—

“ Le protestantisme, à sa naissance, avait senti le besoin de se créer une généalogie qui rattachât aux temps apostoliques. . . . . Il était sans doute peu sévère dans le choix des preuves, il lui suffisait de quelques paroles amères tombées de la plume d'un homme célèbre sur les abus contemporains, pour l'admettre immédiatement au catalogue des prétendus témoins de la vérité. Dante ne pouvait échapper à ces honneurs posthumes. . . . . On citait surtout le dernier chant du Purgatoire, où se trouve prédit un envoyé du ciel qui châtierà la prostituée assise sur la bête aux sept têtes, aux dix cornes. ‘ *Messo di Dio anciderà la fuia.*’ (*Purg.* xxxiii. 44.) . . . . Cet envoyé, disait on, n'était autre que Luther; . . . . tels furent les argumens de ceux qui, dès le quinzième siècle, tentèrent de populariser en Italie les opinions nouvelles à l'ombre d'un nom vénéré†. Le patriotisme italien répondit noblement par l'organe du cardinal Bellarmin, qui ne dédaigna pas de consacrer sa plume à la défense du poète national‡. Les mêmes questions s'agitèrent en France entre Duplessis-Mornay et Coëffeteau§; et ce fut peut-être sur une

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\* Dante et la Philosophie Catholique, au Treizième Siècle.

† Avviso piacevole dato alla Bella Italia da un nobile giovine francese.

‡ Bellarmin, Appendix ad Libros de Summo Pontifice; Responsio ad Librum quendam anonymum.

§ Duplessis-Mornay, le Mystère d'Iniquité, p. 419.—Coëffeteau, Réponse au livre intitulé le Mystère &c. p. 1032.

connaissance incomplète du débat que le père Hardouin prononça l'arrêt bizarre où il déclare la Divine Comédie l'œuvre d'un disciple de Wicléf. . . . . De nos jours on a vu le nouveau système proposé par Ugo Foscolo\*. . . . . Le pauvre proscrit, Dante, n'a pas trouvé dans sa couche funèbre le repos qui, là du moins, attend le reste des mortels. On l'en a tiré pour le jeter, encore couvert de son linceul, dans l'arène des factions, pour en effrayer, comme d'un fantôme, les esprits vulgaires. Heureusement des mains pieuses sont venues l'arracher à ces profanations. Foscolo a trouvé un adversaire victorieux dans Monti, son ancien rival ; et naguère encore l'oracle de la critique allemande, A. W. Schlegel, a lavé pour toujours la flétrissure de déloyauté qu'il imprimait au front de Dante. . . . . Un reproche subaiste contre lui, c'est l'opiniâtreté avec laquelle il poursuit de ses invectives la cour romaine et les souverains pontifes, versant l'injure à pleines mains sur la tête de ceux dont il devrait baiser les pieds. . . . . Ce fut imprudence et colère, ce fut erreur et faute, mais non pas hérésie. . . . . Nous avons entendu Dante se séparer hautement du naturalisme moderne, quand il proclamait la révélation comme le suprême *criterium* de la vérité logique et de la loi morale ; lorsqu'à son gré la plus noble fonction de la philosophie est de conduire, par les merveilles qu'elle explique, aux miracles inexplicables, sur lesquels s'appuie la foi ; lorsqu'enfin il rend gloire à cette foi venue d'en haut, par laquelle seule on mérite de philosopher éternellement au sein de la céleste Athènes, où les sages de toutes les écoles s'accordent dans la contemplation de l'intelligence infinie†. . . . . Si ces indications générales ne suffisent pas, et qu'il soit besoin d'une profession de foi expresse sur chacun des points contestés, cette exigence sera satisfaite. . . . . C'est avec une sorte de prédilection qu'il décrit l'économie de la pénitence. . . . . Il ne se lasse point de recommander aux suffrages des vivans

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\* La Commedia di Dante Alighieri, illustrata da Ugo Foscolo.—Rossetti, Sullo spirito anti-papale che produsse la Riforma.

† Convito, iii. 7, 11 ; iv. 15. De Monarchia. iii.

les âmes souffrantes; sa confiance en l'intercession des saints redouble en s'adressant à la Vierge Marie\*; enfin les ordres religieux et l'institution même du saint Office, trouvent grâce à ses yeux, et saint Dominique est célébré dans ses chants: 'comme l'amant jaloux de la foi chrétienne, plein de douceur pour ses disciples, redoutable à ses ennemis.' "

On one point here we must disagree with M. Ozanam. We see not a shadow of proof that the institution of the Holy Office found favour in the sight of Dante, and see every reason for deeming it impossible. If ever man desired perfect liberty of thought and speech it was Dante: he has exercised both in his *Commedia* at the imminent peril of being seized by the Inquisition, pronounced a heretic, and doomed to the stake without power of defence or of appeal. Is it to be believed that he could approve of such a tribunal? or that the abolition of it did not enter into his grand scheme of religious and political reform?

Whatever differences there may be among Protestant Christians on speculative points, and however some may regret the loss of a supreme spiritual head and central authority in the Church, all must unite in detestation of an ecclesiastical court constituted like the Inquisition—secret, absolute, and irresponsible; with power to pry into the religious opinions of men, and bound by no fixed rule in determining what are heretical; free from all control of the civil power, and commanding it in the execution of its sentences. Intellectual freedom and advancement must languish where such a tribunal is tolerated, and the church which sanctions it renders itself

\* Paradiso, iv. 14.—Purgatorio, passim.—Paradiso, xxxiii. 1.



deservedly odious and provokes to schism. On that one account alone the separation of the Anglican Church from that of Rome was more than justified. But the breach was inevitable on higher grounds ; and when determined upon, the prudent conduct of the great reformers who composed our Liturgy can never be sufficiently extolled for their endeavour to retain all that was excellent in the doctrine and discipline of their erring but still venerated parent, and studiously avoiding all the corruptions and superstitions which she had acquired through age and inordinate power.

The religious system of Dante is a qualified Romanism, that embraces much which the Anglican church rejects, but is orthodox on essential points ; and by studying it, there is no reasonable mind that will not be improved in knowledge and liberality. Belief will be confirmed, rooted prejudices removed, and the sectarian, if not incorrigibly bigoted, must be led to think more charitably of the different religious persuasion of others. In the *Commedia* we may gather a full exposition of the Pater Noster, and the Credo. It expounds also the "mystery and hidden wisdom" of Christianity, as delivered by the scholastic divines and doctors of the church. Critics are not unanimous in their approval of the discussion of such profound subjects in verse, and M. Merian and M. Ozanam have expressed their differences strongly. It is the opinion of M. Merian\*, that all science, whether physical or metaphysi-

\* The work of M. Merian is spoken of with the highest praise by Tiraboschi : it is only to be met with in the original French in the Memoirs of the Academy of Berlin, 1784, but an Italian translation by G. Polidori is given in vol. iv. of Zotti's Dante.



cal, is unadapted to poetry ; and that Theology is particularly so, being necessarily arid, and when taught in the language of the schoolmen is so repulsive in verse that not even the power of Dante can render it tolerable.

“ Dante aveva, per sua sventura, tutto il garbuglio scolastico in testa, e non voleva che vi fosse inutilmente. . . . . Io non porrò la sua morale fra le scienze che han guastato la sua poesia. Egli non ce la presenta molto a guisa di Scienza . . . . . Le sue morali sentenze son semplici e corte ; e la loro energica precisione ne ha fatto passar gran numero in proverbj ed in massime. Nascon esse dal soggetto naturalmente, e mai non ne escono per far corpo separatamente.”

Among the striking moral sentences produced in exemplification by M. Merian is the following:—

“ Considerate la vostra semenza ;  
Fatti non foste a viver come bruti,  
Ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza.” *Inf.* xxvi. 118.

“ Bear your illustrious origin in view ;  
For not to live like brutes were ye design'd,  
But knowledge high and virtue to pursue !” *Wright.*

These lines are the peroration of the animating address of Ulysses to his companions whom he had induced to accompany him on his adventurous voyage, when (according to Dante) he passed the Pillars of Hercules, followed the course of the sun, and was finally wrecked on the Isle of Purgatory, the antipode of Jerusalem. The whole narrative of Ulysses is highly pleasing, and has a simplicity that recalls the narrations of the Bible. The fiction too is very curious, as a prophetic anticipation, by two hundred years, of the voyage of Columbus. We shall give the passage entire.

“ Quando

Mi diparti' da Circe che sottrasse  
Me più d'un anno là presso a Gaeta,  
Prima che sì Enea la nominasse :

Nè dolcezza del figlio, nè la pietà  
Del vecchio padre, nè 'l debito amore  
Lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,

Vincer potero dentro a me l' ardore  
Ch' io ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto,  
E delli vizj umani, e del valore ;

Ma misimi per l' alto mare aperto  
Sol con un legno, e con quella compagna  
Picciola dalla qual non fui deserto.

L' un lito e l' altro vidi infin la Spagna  
Fin nel Marocco, e l' isola de' Sardi,  
E l' altre che quel mare intorno bagna

Io e i compagni eravam vecchi e tardi  
Quando venimmo a quella foce stretta  
Ov' Ercole segnò li suoi riguardi,

Acciocchè l' uom più oltre non si metta  
Dalla man destra mi lasciai Sibilia,  
Dall' altra già m' avea lasciata Setta.

' O frati,' dissi, ' che per cento milia  
Perigli siete giunti all' Occidente,  
A questa tanto picciola vigilia

De' vostri sensi ch' è del rimanente  
Non vogliate negar l' esperienza,  
Diretro al Sol, del mondo senza gente.

Considerate la vostra semenza :  
Fatti non foste a viver come bruti,  
Ma per seguir virtude e conoscenza.'

Li miei compagni fec' io sì acuti,  
Con questa orazion picciola, al cammino,  
Ch' appena poscia gli avrei ritenuti.

E volta nostra poppa nel mattino,  
De' remi facemmo ali al folle volo,  
Sempre acquistando dal lato mancino.

Tutte le stelle già dell' altro polo



Vedea la notte, e 'l nostro tanto basso  
Che non surgea di fuor del marin suolo.

Cinque volte raccesso e tante casso  
Lo lume era di sotto dalla Luna,  
Poi ch' entrati eravam nell' alto passo,  
Quando n' apparve una montagna bruna  
Per la distanza, e parvemi alta tanto  
Quanto veduta non n' aveva alcuna.

Noi ci allegrammo; e tosto tornò in pianto;  
Che dalla nuova terra un turbo nacque,  
E percosse del legno il primo canto.

Tre volte il fe' girar con tutte l' acque;  
Alla quarta levar la poppa in suso,  
E la prora ire in giù com' altrui piacque,  
Infin che 'l mar fu sopra noi richiuso." *Inf.* xxvi. 90.

" When I escaped  
From Circe, who beyond a circling year  
Had held me near Caieta by her charms,  
Ere thus Æneas yet had named the shore;  
Nor fondness for my son, nor reverence  
Of my old father, nor return of love,  
That should have crown'd Penelope with joy,  
Could overcome in me the zeal I had  
To explore the world, and search the ways of life,  
Man's evil and his virtue. Forth I sail'd  
Into the deep illimitable main,  
With but one bark, and the small faithful band  
That yet cleaved to me. As Iberia far,  
Far as Marocco either shore I saw,  
And the Sardinian and each isle beside  
Which round that ocean bathes. Tardy with age  
Were I and my companions, when we came  
To the strait pass, where Hercules ordain'd  
The boundaries not to be o'erstepp'd by man.  
The walls of Seville to my right I left,  
On the other hand already Ceuta past.  
' O brothers!' I began, ' who to the west

Through perils without number now have reach'd ;  
 To this the short remaining watch, that yet  
 Our senses have to wake, refuse not proof  
 Of the unpeopled world, following the track  
 Of Phœbus. Call to mind from whence ye sprang :  
 Ye were not form'd to live the life of brutes,  
 But virtue to pursue and knowledge high.'  
 With these few words I sharpen'd for the voyage  
 The mind of my associates, that I then  
 Could scarcely have withheld them. To the dawn  
 Our poop we turn'd, and for the witless flight  
 Made our oars wings, still gaining on the left.  
 Each star of the other pole night now beheld,  
 And ours so low, that from the ocean floor  
 It rose not. Five times re-illumed, as oft  
 Vanish'd the light from underneath the moon,  
 Since the deep way we enter'd, when from far  
 Appear'd a mountain dim, loftiest methought  
 Of all I e'er beheld. Joy seized us straight,  
 But soon to mourning changed. From the new land  
 A whirlwind sprung, and at her foremost side  
 Did strike the vessel. Thrice it whirl'd her round  
 With all the waves, the fourth time lifted up  
 The stern, and sank the prow : so fate decreed :  
 And over us the booming billow closed." Cary.

This passage is one of our greatest favourites in the *Commedia* ; and we have pleasure in giving the notes upon it of the late Francis Horner, M.P., extracted from the MS. referred to in Appendix D. of the valuable memoirs preparing for publication by his brother, Leonard Horner, Esq. The notes are judicious, pleasing, and original : and to us they have a great additional interest, from a melancholy remembrance of the time when they were written. In the autumn of 1816 Mr. F. Horner, then in his thirty-eighth year, and attacked by a fatal



disease, had fled from professional and parliamentary labours to pass the winter in Italy. In December he took up Dante for the first time, at Pisa, as a recreation in sickness, congenial to his powerful and undebilitated mind. In the February following he expired: so that the last of these notes were written literally in the short remaining remnant of his life, "*nella vigilia\* de' sensi*," in the vigil of the senses, as he has well interpreted the phrase.

"The account which Ulysses gives of his expedition and death in the Atlantic ocean, is a more extended piece of narration than is anywhere else to be found in this poem. It is clear, interesting, and expressed throughout with a noble propriety of diction. No extract from Dante taken by itself would be more pleasing, though it would not afford a specimen of his characteristic. It has some of his excellences in a high degree; a perspicuous conciseness, and in some parts great force of expression. It begins beautifully.

'Nè dolcezza di figlio, nè la pietà  
Del vecchio padre,' &c. &c.

"In the progress of the introductory narrative he introduces with great judgement a circumstance of which he is afterwards to make use:—

'Io e i compagni eravam vecchi e tardi.'

The terms in which he mentions the pillars of Hercules are original and grand:—

\* Vigilia. L'assistenza che fanno i religiosi intorno ai corpi de' morti innanzi che si sotterrino.—*Crusca*.

‘ Quando venimmo a quella foce stretta  
 Ov’ Ercole segnò li suoi *riguardi*,  
 Acciocchè l’ uom più oltre non si metta.’

The generality of the other expression, *l’ uom*, ‘ in order that *man* might not think of going farther,’ while it sets out the pride of Hercules, seems to magnify the exploit on which Ulysses was about to venture. There is shortly after this a poetical image, of eminent beauty, which I do not know how to translate into English, the change in our customs having left us no word to express that on which the metaphor turns. By a very pleasing figure, we say ‘ the evening of our days,’ for the last calm remnant of life. Ulysses, rousing his old worn-out companions to a last effort of adventure, calls their remnant of life, ‘ this short vigil of our senses.’

‘ A questa tanto picciola vigilia  
 De’ vostri sensi, ch’ è del rimanente  
 Non vogliate negar,’ &c.

The *vigilia*, in the Romish church, is the service which is performed the night before interment, the corpse being laid out ; ‘ the vigil of the senses,’ therefore is, in this poetical use of the phrase, the interval of old age, after the senses may be said to be dead, before the final extinction of breath.” (F. H.)

M. Merian expatiates on the beauty of the lines which mark the fickleness and short duration of fame, especially in the fine arts, where excellence may be so soon eclipsed by a rival ; a Cimabue by a Giotto, a Guinicelli by a Cavalcante.

“ La vostra nominanza è color d’ erba  
 Che viene e va, e quei la discolora  
 Per cui ell’ esce della terra acerba.”

*Purg.* xi. 115.

“ Your fame is like the grass, whose varying hue  
 Doth come and go, by that same sun destroy'd  
 From whose warm ray its vigour first it drew.” *Wright.*

In another example we see Dante take advantage of the idea of Plato, who compares the human soul to the butterfly which throws off the covering of the chrysalis and then flies freely into the air : Dante uses the simile for the reprehension of pride, and to instil the duty of preparing the soul for a higher state of existence.

“ O superbi Cristian ', miseri, lassi,  
 Che della vista della mente infermi  
 Fidanza avete ne' ritrosi passi ;  
 Non v' accorgete voi che noi siam vermi,  
 Nati a formar l' angelica farfalla  
 Che vola alla giustizia senza schermi ?  
 Di che l' animo vostro in alto galla ?  
 Voi siete quasi entomata in difetto,  
 Sì come verme in cui formazion falla.” *Purg. x. 121..*

“ O Christians proud ! O feeble wretched race !  
 Who seeing darkly with the mental eye,  
 Upon your backward steps reliance place ;  
 Perceive ye not that grovelling worms ye are,  
 Born to become the angelic butterfly,  
 Which, unrestrain'd, to justice doth repair ?  
 Wherefore do ye so haughtily aspire ?  
 Insects ye are, made but imperfectly,  
 Like worms in embryo, not of form entire.” *Wright.*

M. Merian observes,—

“ Questa non è morale involta in ghiaccio come quella de' casisti sulla quale Dante s'è qualche volta disacconciamente fermato. . . . Dopo aver riposato lo spirito sopra questa Dantesca Morale, e sopra le sue morali sentenze abbellite de' più vaghi colori della poesia,



bisogna che rientriamo ne'campi della scienza, e della più arida delle scienze. Seguiremo adesso il favorito delle Muse pe' ronchi e per le spine delle scuole ch'ei vorrebbe con tutta l' arte sua render floride ; ma l'arte sua s'esercita sopra d'una dura ed intrattabil materia che non è capace di belle forme ; poichè, per servirmi delle sue proprie parole—

‘ Forma non s’ accorda  
Molte fiate alla ’ntenzion dell’ arte  
Perchè a risponder, la materia è sorda.’ Par. i. 127.

‘ Yet is it true,  
That oftentimes but ill accords the form  
To the design of art, through sluggishness  
Of unreplying matter.’ Cary.

Come mai un tal uomo, paragonando le sue metafisiche rime agli altri suoi versi, poteva non accorgersi dell'inferiorità, e non udir la Poesia sospirare e gemere per l'alleanza mostruosa che le faceva contrarre? Bisogna ben dire che la moda o la smania del suo secolo lo avesse stranamente affascinato.

“ Quantunque vi sia gran numero di Teologi nel suo Inferno, e chè non ve ne manchino nel Purgatorio, il Cielo è però il seggio della Teologia, il più convenevol luogo per esaminarne e deciderne le più profonde questioni. Ivi è la sorgente di questa scienza ; ivi è la quiete e l'ozio necessario ad internarvisi ; ivi è il convegno di quegli che più l'hanno illustrata ; imperciocchè là radunansi gli autori dei libri della vecchia e della nuova alleanza ; là sono i difensori e gli Apologisti più zelanti della Fede, ed i flagelli dell'Eresia ; i Padri i quali dopo aver instruito ed edificato la chiesa militante, hanno meritato d'essere accolti nella chiesa trionfante ; là trovansi quei dottori, quei disputatori ed appoggi del Dogma, quei casisti famosi i quali dalle mondane scuole son passati alle celesti, ov'eglino continuano la loro professione.

“ Là trovansi tutti i santi antichi e nuovi. Tra questi ultimi sorgono quasi cedri San Benedetto, San Buonaventura, e specialmente

San Francesco e San Domenico ; l'uno bruciò di fuoco serafico ; l'altro è il Cherubin della Chiesa sopra la Terra.

‘ L’ un fu tutto serafico in ardore,  
L’ altro per sapienza in terra fue  
Di cherubica luce uno splendore.’ *Par. xi. 37.*

Nell mezzo di quell’augusta congregazione Dante subisce un rigoroso esame, al quale tre grandi Apostoli han le garbatezza di presiedere. Il Barone San Pietro (quest’è il titolo che Dante gli dà) l’interroga sulla fede, il Baron Sant’Jacopo sulla speranza ; e San Giovanni che non è Barone, sopra la carità. Il nostro candidato definisce sì bene la quiddità di queste tre virtù, e ne sviluppa sì esattamente l’oggetto materiale e formale, ch’egli esce felicissimamente dalla sua prova. I suoi esaminatori gli fanno dei complimenti, San Pietro lo abbraccia, e Beatrice s’ unisce al celeste uditorio per intuonare il *Sanctus* in segno d’approvazione :

‘ Siccom’ io tacqui, un dolcissimo canto  
Risuonò per lo cielo, e la mia Donna  
Dicea con gli altri : Santo, Santo, Santo.’ *Par. xvi. 67.*

Uno debbe già essersi figurato che questa Beatrice sia una gran Teologhessa, se non la Teologia personificata, come pretendono gli investigatori de’sensi allegorici : ora ella va scrutinando da rigida casista i più spinosi casi di coscienza ; ora esercitandosi sul Dogma, ella va analizzando la dottrina del peccato originale e della Satisfazione così minutamente che il più ortodosso dottore non potrebbe trovar niente nè da aggiungervi nè da censurarvi, ma quì si vedrà tra i pruni del Dogma uscir fuori qualche bel tratto ove si dipingono ad un tempo gli effetti morali e fisici della morte di Gesù Cristo :

‘ Per lei tremò la terra e il ciel s’ aperse.’ *Par. vii. 48.*

Ella mi sembra meno felice nella sua prova della resurrezione de’ nostri corpi, che vorrebbe stabilire sull’esser essi discesi da Adamo

e da Eva che non furono formati della composizione de'loro elementi, ma furono immediatamente creati da Dio; sofisma debile quanto una tela di ragno, ed egualmente facile ad esser distrutto.

“ La creazione e la natura degli Angeli formano uno de' favoriti temi di essa. Prova ella ampiamente che furon creati col mondo materiale perchè nell'eternità non v'è nè prima nè poi, e perchè la creazione è un atto semplice. Così la materia elementare, le forme pure e le forme miste sono uscite nel medesimo istante da Dio come tre frecce tirate da un arco a tre nervi.

‘ Forma e materia congiunte e purette  
Usciro ad atto che non avea fallo  
Come d' arco tricolore tre saette.’

*Par. xxix. 22.*

‘ Simple and mix'd, both form and substance, forth  
To perfect being started, like three darts  
Shot from a bow three corded.’

*Cary.*

Qui Beatrice combatte colle armi di San Tommaso l'opinione di San Girolamo, il quale mette gli Angeli preesistenti alla materia visibile. Ella tratta della loro essenza, del loro numero, della caduta degli angeli ribelli, dei diversi gradi del loro splendore e della loro beatitudine. Ma sulle loro classi e sulla loro subordinazione ella lascia San Tommaso e San Gregorio per seguire il supposto Dionisio Areopagita, assicurandoci che Gregorio stesso riconosce adesso il suo errore, e ne ride in cielo ove vede le cose più da vicino. (*Par. xxviii, 130.*) In fine, quanto alla formal beatitudine degli Angeli, ella rientra nella Dottrina di Tommaso, il quale la fa consistere nel vedere Dio, contro il sentimento di Scoto, che la limita nell'amarlo.

“ Bramo essere scusato se non seguo Madonna Beatrice nella sua cicalata: ella ha il difetto del suo sesso di non mai farla finita. . . . Se la scienza di Dante vi ha annojati, permettetemi di rallegrarmene. La vostra noja dimostra la mia Tesi, cioè, che La Scienza Guasta La Poesia.”



The voice of the many is in unison with M. Merian, that of the few only with M. Ozanam.

“Basta che a pochi e non al volgo piaci.” *Salvini.*

It must be granted that to most men Theology is an unattractive science, and that it occupies so large a portion of the Purgatorio and Paradiso as to repel many from the perusal of those Canticles, who are well acquainted with the Inferno, are captivated by its scenes of horror, and at the same time can justly appreciate its varied excellences. Natural Theology there is in the Inferno also, but it is of that general and poetic nature which—

“Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and God in everything;”

and differs widely from the divinity of the schools, which however transcendental is certainly demonstrated in a language, and by modes of proof, that must be deeply studied to be followed and understood.

M. Ozanam appears to have had the strictures of M. Merian in view when he wrote as follows:—

“Dante a fait l'expérience de ces singulières destinées de la gloire humaine. Les plus beaux génies italiens l'ont salué du nom de philosophe; et l'ont proclamé tout ensemble le docteur des vérités divines—

‘Theologus Dantes, nullius dogmatis expert;’\*

et le savant à qui rien n'échappa des choses humaines: et l'œuvre de tant de veilles et de tant de prédilection, à laquelle il sacrifia sa vie

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\* Vers premier de son épitaphe par Giovanni del Virgilio.

et par laquelle il vainquit la mort, la *Divine Comédie*, ne nous est arrivée après six cents ans qu'en perdant pour nous sa valeur philosophique, c'est à dire peut-être sa valeur principale. Parmi ceux qu'on appelle les gens instruits, beaucoup ne connaissent du poème entier que l'Enfer. Voltaire ne voit dans la *Divine Comédie* qu'un ouvrage bizarre, mais brillant de beautés naturelles. Si les critiques de nos jours en ont abordé la lecture avec des dispositions plus sérieuses, quelques uns n'y ont découvert qu'une inspiration pieusement érotique, d'autres un manifeste politique écrit sous la dictée de la vengeance. Pour les uns et pour les autres les fréquens passages dogmatiques qui s'y rencontrent ne sont guère que la végétation parasite d'un esprit trop fécond et comme la mauvaise herbe de la science contemporaine qui jetait partout ses racines.

“ De toutes les choses du moyen âge, la plus calomniée, celle dont la réhabilitation s'est fait le plus attendre, c'est sa philosophie. Contre elle l'ignorance a suscité le dédain et le dédain à son tour a encouragé l'ignorance. On nous l'a représentée parlant un langage barbare, pédantesque dans ses habitudes, monacal dans ses tendances. Sous ces dehors défavorables, nous l'avons facilement crue absorbée dans des préoccupations toutes Théologiques, alternativement livrée à des spéculations sans profit, ou à des disputes qui n'ont pas de fin. Il nous paraissait que Leibnitz avait traité l'école avec une souveraine indulgence, en assurant qu'on trouverait de l'or dans son fumier. . . . Or, voici une philosophie qui s'exprime dans la langue la plus mélodieuse de l'Europe, dans un idiome vulgaire que les femmes et les enfans comprennent. Ses leçons sont des chants que les princes se font réciter pour charmer leurs loisirs, et que répètent les artisans pour se délasser de leurs travaux. La voici dégagée du cortège de l'école et de la servitude du cloître, aimant à se mêler aux plus doux mystères du cœur, aux plus bruyantes luttes de la place publique : elle est familière, laïque, et tout-à-fait populaire. Si l'on essaie de la suivre dans le cours de ses explorations, on la voit partie de l'étude profonde de la nature humaine, s'avancer étendant ses conjectures sur la création tout entière, pour s'aller perdre à la fin, mais à la fin seulement dans la contemplation de la Divinité.

“ Il existe des préventions d’une autre sorte qu’il n’importe pas moins de repousser. Le nombre est grand aujourd’hui de ceux qui n’attribuent à la poésie qu’un mérite purement esthétique, et n’y voient qu’une beauté résultant de la triple harmonie des pensées, des pensées avec les paroles, des paroles entre elles. Du reste, ces esprits étroits ne tinrent jamais compte ni de la valeur logique de la pensée, ni de la portée morale de la parole.

“ Or, voici un poète qui parut dans un siècle tumultueux, qui marcha comme enveloppé d’orages. Cependant, derrière les ombres mouvantes de la vie, il a pressenti des réalités immuables. Alors conduit par la raison et par la foi, il devance le temps, il pénètre dans le monde invisible ; il s’en met en possession, il s’y établit comme dans sa patrie, lui qui n’a plus de patrie ici-bas.

“ Comme notre poète, pèlerin dans les régions sans bornes de l’histoire, entouré de toutes les figures du passé, il nous est permis qu’un court entretien avec chacune d’elles, sous peine de ne pouvoir aborder les autres. A nous comme à lui, il semble qu’une voix crie ‘ Que le temps nous est mesuré, et que des choses inattendues nous restent à voir.’

“ ‘ E già la Luna è sotto i nostri piedi :  
Lo tempo è poco omai che n’è concesso ;  
E altro è da veder che tu non vedi.’ ” *Inf.* xxix. 10.

We may apply this quotation to ourselves, and remembering that

“ The time which fate allows us now is brief,  
The ‘vigil of the senses’ is at hand,  
And more than has been seen should yet be shown ; ”

we shall hasten to a conclusion, endeavouring still to prove, if it has not already been done, that Dante could invest even Theology with poetic beauty by representing the science under the allegory of his Beatrice.

In revising the *Commedia*, for the purpose of showing the student that the anti-papal spirit of Dante is to be admitted cautiously, and that it is true only in a qualified sense, we have felt the full force of the following fine lines addressed by Salvini to Redi\*, so complimentary to the theological as well as the poetic powers of Dante, and so justly admired:—

“ Redi gentile, Re de' galantuomini,  
 Se volete saper la vita mia,  
 Studiando io sto lungi da tutti gli uomini ;  
 Ed ho imparato più Teologia  
 In questi giorni, che ho riletto Dante,  
 Che nelle Scuole fatto io non avria.  
 Egli vi dice tante cose, e tante  
 In quel suo benedetto almo Poema,  
 Che par, che i sensi tutti quanti incante.  
 E non per questo è la sua gloria scema,  
 Perch' egli ha usate certe voci strane,  
 Che ben si conveniano ad un tal tema.  
 Non camminò per vie battute, e piane :  
 Al Caos penetrò ; passò le Stelle ;  
 Visitò l' ime parti, alte, e mezzane ;  
 E brutte cose, e mediocri, e belle,  
 Prese a dir tutte ; e con vivezza tale,  
 Che voi tosto esclamate, ' Elle son quelle !'  
 Ben descriasse del tutto il quanto, e 'l quale ;  
 E per levar di terra l' intelletto  
 La Beatrice sua gli avea dat' ale.  
 O delle Muse ostel, sacro petto,  
 Sia benedetto il tuo leggiadro spirto,  
 E 'l tuo forte pensier sia benedetto ;

---

\* Francesco Redi, died 1697, aged 71. A. M. Salvini, died 1729, aged 76.



Che or con gentile, or con austero ed irto  
Stile il tuo ingegno dispiegasti altero ;  
Onde ti si conviene e Lauro, e Mirto.  
Quando amoroso parli, egli è sì vero  
Il tuo parlar, che vera esser non puote  
Più verità, figlia d' un cuor sincero.  
Ma quando all' infernali orride ruote  
Inchini, e abbassi il tuo parlar profondo,  
Allor si fan sentir le triste note.  
Sen' va la Musa tua pel bujo mondo,  
Con suon dolente, sbigottita e mesta,  
Girando quei valloni a tondo a tondo.  
E dopo quella di sospir tempesta,  
S' alza più lieta al purgatorio monte ;  
Poi sale al Paradiso tutta festa.  
Tu colle rime tue audaci e pronte,  
Di quei beati e sempiterni scanni  
Fai le bellezze a noi paesi e conte.  
Mostri, quai sien le gioje, e quai gli affanni,  
Ciò che sia da fuggire, e da seguire ;  
Onde il folle mortal si disinganni.  
Che dirò poi ; quando tu aguzzi l' ire,  
E stringi un' innocente almo flagello,  
Che ben' appar, che santo zelo spire ?  
Allora, allora il tuo dir grande e bello  
Prende una tuba sì forte, e gagliarda,  
Che rintuona gli orecchi a questo, e a quello  
Sembra, che in vivo fuoco ella tutt' arda,  
E Cittadi, e Pastor, Popoli, e Regi  
Tocchi la voce tua quasi bombarda.  
Io non ho lodi, onde il tuo nome fregi :  
Basta che a pochi, e non al volgo piaci :  
Che pochi intendon i tuoi veri pregi ;  
E i bei lumi del dire, e quelle faci,  
Onde l' ingegno uman s' avviva e accende,  
Di sublime virtù semi veraci."



In this general yet discriminating praise of the *Commedia*, it is remarkable, we must repeat, how highly its theological instruction is estimated by Salvini. The love which Dante bore to the science, and his increased admiration of its beauty the more profoundly he studied it, and the nearer his understanding arrived at a just conception of the attributes of the Most High, is poetically told by his making his Beatrice its symbol, and by expatiating on her increasing loveliness as he soars with her higher and higher towards the Empyreum.

Beatrice, when in the terrestrial paradise, fixes her eyes on the eternal spheres, and Dante's eyes are fixed on her, and he finds himself imperceptibly transported to the first heaven, that of the moon.

" Beatrice tutta nell' eterne ruote,  
Fissa con gli occhi stava, ed io in lei  
Le luci fisse." Par. i. 64.

" Beatrice in suso, ed io in lui guardava ;  
E forse in tanto in quanto un quadrel posa  
E vola e dalla noce si dischiava,  
Giunta mi vidi ove mirabil cosa  
Mi torse il viso a sè : e però quella  
Cui non potea mia cura esser ascosa,  
Volta ver me sì lieta come bella :  
Drizza la mente in Dio grata, mi disse,  
Che n' ha congiunti con la prima stella." Par. ii. 23.

When he describes the ascent with Beatrice from the Moon to Mercury, the second heaven, he says the orb—

" Grew brighter at her smiles ; and if the star  
Were moved to gladness, what then was my cheer,  
Whom nature hath made apt for every change !" Cary.



" Così Beatrice a me com' io scrivo :  
 Poi si rivolse tutta disiante  
 A quella parte ove il mondo è più vivo.  
 Lo suo tacere e il tramutar sembiante  
 Poser silenzio al mio cupido ingegno,  
 Che già nuove quistioni avea davante.  
 E sì come saetta, che nel segno  
 Percuote pria che sia la corda queta,  
 Così corremmo nel secondo regno.  
 Quivi la donna mia vid' io sì lieta,  
 Come nel lume di quel ciel si mise,  
 Che più lucente se ne fe' il pianeta.  
 E se la stella si cambiò e rise ;  
 Qual mi fec' io, che pur di mia natura  
 Trasmutabile son per tutte guise !"

*Par. v. 85.*

A further augmentation of the beauty of Beatrice makes him sensible of his removal to the third heaven, the planet Venus, the star of evening and of morning.

" La stella  
 Che il Sol vagheggia or da coppa or da ciglio.  
 Io non m' accorsi del salire in ella :  
 Ma d' esserv' entro mi fece assai fede  
 La donna mia ch' io vidi far più bella."

*Par. viii. 11.*

On his ascent from Venus to the fourth heaven, that of the Sun, the beauty of Beatrice, he says, became beyond expression,—

" Io era con lui ; ma del salire  
 Non m' accors' io se non com' uom s' accorge  
 Anzi 'l primo pensier del suo venire :  
 E Beatrice, quella che si scorge  
 Di bene in meglio sì subitamente  
 Che l' atto suo per tempo non si scorge  
 Quant' esser convenia da sè lucente !"

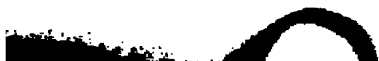
*Par. x. 34.*

The bright objects of the Sun overpowered his vision ; but by looking on the indescribable beauty of Beatrice he finds its strength restored and that he has ascended to the fifth heaven, the planet of Mars.

“ O vero sfavillar del santo spiro,  
Come si fece subito e candente  
Agli occhi miei, che vinti nol soffriro !  
Ma Beatrice sì bella e ridente  
Mi si mostrò, che tra l' altre vedute  
Si vuol lasciar che non seguir' la mente.  
Quindi ripreser gli occhi miei virtute  
A rilevarsi, e vidimi translato  
Sol con mia donna a più alta salute.  
Ben m' accors' io, ch' i' era più levato,  
Per l' affocato riso della stella  
Che mi pareva più roggio che l' usato.” *Par. xiv. 76.*

The heaven of Mars is appropriated to the souls of those who have died fighting for the faith, and they are seen, when moving to the sound of a melodious hymn, to form the sign of the cross. It is here that Cacciaguida foretels the exile and misfortunes of Dante ; and when he terminates his discourse, Dante remains rapt in melancholy reflections. He is comforted by Beatrice, and gazes on her with such affection and earnestness as to call from her an amiable rebuke, which teaches allegorically that there are other objects besides religion on which it is the duty of man to fix his attention.

“ Già si godeva solo del suo verbo  
Quello spirto beato, ed io gustava  
Lo mio, temprando 'l dolce con l' acerbo :  
E quella donna ch' a Dio mi menava,  
Disse : Muta pensier, pensa ch' io sono  
Presso a colui ch' ogni torto disgrava.



Io mi rivolsi all' amoroso suono  
 Del mio conforto ; e, quale io allor vidi  
 Negli occhi santi amor, quì l' abbandono :

Non perch' io pur del mio parlar diffidi,  
 Ma per la mente che non può reddire  
 Sovra sè tanto, s' altri non la guidi.

Tanto poss' io di quel punto ridire,  
 Che rimirando lei, lo mio affetto  
 Libero fu da ogni altro disire.

Fin che 'l piacere eterno, che diretto  
 Raggiava in Beatrice, dal bel viso,  
 Mi contentava col secondo aspetto ;

Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso,  
 Ella mi disse : Volgiti, ed ascolta,  
 Che non pur ne' miei occhi è Paradiso." *Par. xviii. 1.*

" Now in his word, sole, ruminating, joy'd  
 That blessed spirit : and I fed on mine,  
 Tempering the sweet with bitter. She meanwhile,  
 Who led me unto God, admonish'd : ' Muse  
 On other thoughts : bethink thee, that near Him  
 I dwell, who recompenseth every wrong.'  
 " At the sweet sounds of comfort straight I turn'd ;  
 And, in the saintly eyes what love was seen,  
 I leave in silence here : nor through distrust  
 Of my words only, but that to such bliss  
 The mind remounts not without aid. Thus much  
 Yet may I speak ; that as I gazed on her,  
 Affection found no room for other wish.  
 While the everlasting pleasure, that did full  
 On Beatrice shine, with second view  
 From her fair countenance my gladden'd soul  
 Contented ; vanquishing me with a beam  
 Of her soft smile, she spake : ' Turn thee, and list.  
 These eyes are not thy only Paradise.' "

*Cary.*

Dante, thus admonished, turns again to his ancestor Cacciaguida, who directs his attention to several crusaders and re-

nowned warriors in the cause of religion, Joshua, Maccabeus, Charlemagne, Orlando and others, bright luminaries, who congregating together form the figure of a cross,—

“ Sî costellati facean nel profondo  
Marte quei raggi il venerabil segno  
Che fan giunture di quadranti in tondo.” *Par.* xiv. 100.

“ Like stars thick-studded in the depth of Mars  
Those rays described the venerable sign  
Which quadrants in the circle joining form.” *C. & L.*

Cacciaguida then retires and mingles with the celestial choir.

“ Indi tra l’ altre luci mota e mista  
Mostrommi l’ alma che m’ avea parlato,  
Qual era tra i cantor’ del Cielo artista.” *Par.* xviii. 49.

“ Thus having spoke, among the other lights  
He mix’d and moved away, and with the quire  
Of heavenly songsters proved his tuneful skill.” *C. & L.*

Upon Cacciaguida’s departure, Dante is apprised of his further elevation, by seeing the miracle of beauty, Beatrice, still further adorned in loveliness, and he finds himself transported to the sixth heaven, that of Jupiter :—

“ Sî m’ accors’ io che ’l mio girare intorno  
Col Cielo ’nsieme avea cresciuto l’ arco,  
Veggendo quel miracolo più adorno.  
E quale è il trasmutare in picciol varco  
Di tempo in bianca donna, quando ’l volto  
Suo si discarchi di vergogna il carico ;  
Tal fu negli occhi miei, quando fui volto,  
Per lo candor della temprata stella  
Sesta, che dentro a sè m’ avea raccolto.” *Par.* xviii. 61.

The ascent to the seventh heaven, the planet Saturn, is thus announced :—



“ Già eran gli occhi miei rissati al volto  
 Della mia donna, e l'animo con essi,  
 E da ogni altro intento s'era tolto :  
 Ed ella non ridea : ma, S'io ridessi,  
 Mi cominciò, tu ti faresti quale  
 Fu Semelè quando di cener fessi :  
 Che la bellezza mia, che per le scale  
 Dell'eterno palazzo più s'accende,  
 Com'hai veduto, quanto più si sale,  
 Se non si temperasse, tanto splende,  
 Che 'l tuo mortal podere al suo fulgore  
 Parrebbe fronda che trono scoscende.

Noi sem levati al settimo splendore.” *Par. xxi. 1.*

“ Again mine eyes were fix'd on Beatrice ;  
 And, with mine eyes, my soul that in her looks  
 Found all contentment. Yet no smile she wore :  
 And, ' Did I smile,' she said, ' thou wouldst be straight  
 Like Semele when into ashes turn'd :  
 For, mounting these eternal palace-stairs,  
 My beauty, which the loftier it climbs,  
 As thou hast noted, still doth kindle more,  
 So shines, that, were no tempering interposed,  
 Thy mortal puissance would from its rays  
 Shrink, as the leaf doth from the thunderbolt.  
 Into the seventh splendour are we wafted.' ”

*Cary.*

Saturn is the abode of the souls of the devout and contemplative. A ladder is seen there “ In colour like to sun-illuminated gold,” rising so high that the eye reaches not to its summit, and luminaries are continually descending and ascending upon it; two of these address Dante, first Pietro Damiano, a Benedictine monk and cardinal, and afterwards St. Benedict himself. Both of them condemn bitterly the idleness, pomp and luxury of the monks and priesthood. Damiano concludes his declamation thus :—

“ Cuopron de' manti loro i palafreni,  
 Sì che due bestie van sott' una pelle :  
 O pazienza che tanto sostieni ! ” *Par. xxi. 133.*

“ Their mantles o'er their palfreys' sides they spread,  
 So that two beasts are cover'd by one skin.  
 How long will Heaven with patience view such pride ? ”  
*W. & L.*

The critic Ginguené observes on these lines,—

“ Dante ajoute, ‘ O patience divine, peux tu donc en tant souffrir ? ’  
 O colère, ajouterai-je à mon tour, peux tu faire descendre si bas un  
 aussi grand génie\* ? ”

Dante had difficulties to contend with in his *Paradiso* that could scarcely be overcome. In his *Inferno* the powerful poetic instrument, terror, was at his command. In his *Purgatorio* the scenes of misery could be softened by hope : but in his *Paradiso* he had to describe a region of pure light inhabited by happy spirits whose sole occupation was contemplation and praise ; and he found it impossible to make his poem endurable without an admixture of earthly passions and interests : he therefore called theology to his aid, as the sublimest of the sciences and the most natural for discussion in such a place ; and by detailing the peculiarities of Christianity, more particularly the tenets of the church of Rome, by decanting on the conduct of its professors for good and for evil, and thus having opportunities for praise and blame ; by prophesying his own misfortunes, and a general political and religious reform, he acquired the means of awakening human sympathies. The skill which he has evinced is beyond all

\* Hist. Litt. d'Italie, vol. ii. p. 229.

praise, in thus making the *Commedia* an invaluable monument in the history of religion, and in tempting the mind to exercise its faculties on the profoundest and most important of questions; but the indulgence of his satire is excessive, often in bad taste, far too virulent, and sadly misplaced. Pietro Damiano has afforded an instance. St. Peter's invective stands preeminent (C. xxvii. 13.), where Dante makes the countenance of the apostle, though in the eighth heaven! redden with indignation at the recollection of the unworthiness of his successors in the See of Rome. "*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?*"

When the exclamation of Pietro Damiano is uttered—

"O pazienza che tanto sostieni!"—

a shout of approbation resounds through heaven so loud and overpowering as to astound the senses of Dante.

"A questa voce vid' io più fiammelle  
Di grado in grado scendere e girarsi,  
Ed ogni giro le facea più belle.  
Dintorno a questa vennero, e fermarsi,  
E fero un grido di sì alto suono,  
Che non potrebbe quì assomigliarsi :  
Nè io lo 'ntesi, sì mi vinse il tuono." *Par. xxi. 136.*

"This spoken, I saw many a gentle flame  
Descending step by step, then moving round  
Become at every turn more beautiful.  
Circling the flame which spake to me, they paused,  
And gave a shout so loud and deep, the like  
Earth never heard, nor knew I what it spake,  
My senses so its thunder did astound." *W. C. & L.*

Dante turns as usual for succour to Beatrice, who encourages



him and directs him to notice the glorious spirits within their view.

“ Oppresso di stupore, alla mia guida  
 Mi volsi come parvol che ricorre  
 Sempre colà dove più si confida.  
 E quella, come madre che soccorre  
 Subito al figlio pallido ed anelo  
 Con la sua voce che 'l suol ben disporre,  
 Mi disse : Non sai tu che tu se 'n Cielo,  
 E non sai tu che 'l Cielo è tutto santo,  
 E ciò che ci si fa vien da buon zelo ?  
 Come t' avrebbe trasmutato il canto  
 Ed io ridendo, mo pensar lo puoi,  
 Poesia che 'l grido t' ha mosso cotanto :  
 Nel qual se 'nteso avessi i prieghi suoi,  
 Già ti sarebbe nota la vendetta,  
 La qual vedrai innanzi che tu muoi.  
 La spada di quassù non taglia in fretta  
 Nè tardo, ma che al parer di colui  
 Che desiando o temendo l' aspetta.  
 Ma rivolgiti omai inverso altrui :  
 Ch' assai illustri spiriti vedrai,  
 Se, com' io dico, l' aspetto ridui.”

*Par. xxii. 1.*

“ Astounded, to the guardian of my steps  
 I turn'd me, like the child, who always runs  
 Thither for succour, where he trusteth most :  
 And she was like the mother, who her son  
 Beholding pale and breathless, with her voice  
 Soothes him, and he is cheer'd ; for thus she spake,  
 Soothing me : ‘ Know'st not thou, thou art in heaven ?  
 And know'st not thou, whatever is in heaven,  
 Is holy ; and that nothing there is done,  
 But is done zealously and well ? Deem now,  
 What change in thee the song, and what my smile  
 Had wrought, since thus the shout had power to move thee ;  
 In which, couldst thou have understood their prayers,

The vengeance were already known to thee,  
Which thou must witness ere thy mortal hour.  
The sword of heaven is not in haste to smite,  
Nor yet doth linger; save unto his seeming,  
Who, in desire or fear, expecteth it.  
But elsewhere now I bid thee turn thy view;  
So shalt thou many a famous spirit behold."

Cary.

One of the most shining and greatest of these pearls is St. Benedict, who converses with Dante and affirms that a miracle is requisite to restore the purity of the church, though a less one he says may serve than that which redeemed the children of Israel from Egyptian darkness:—

"Veramente, Giordan volto retrorso,  
Più fu il mar fuggir, quando Dio volse,  
Mirabile a veder, che quì il soccorso." *Par. xii. 94.*

"Jordan was turn'd back:  
And a less wonder, than the reflux sea,  
May at God's pleasure work amendment here." *Cary.*

St. Benedict retires, and Dante is wafted to the eighth heaven, the sphere of the fixed stars.

"So saying, to his assembly back he drew:  
And they together cluster'd into one;  
Then all roll'd upward, like an eddying wind.  
"The sweet dame beckon'd me to follow them:  
And, by that influence only, so prevail'd  
Over my nature, that no natural motion,  
Ascending or descending here below,  
Had, as I mounted, with my pennon vied." *Cary.*

Dante enters the eighth heaven at the constellation Gemini, under which he was born; and his poetic address to those

stars has occasioned much controversy, whether his belief in celestial influences was real or fictitious.

“ Io vidi 'l segno  
 Che segue 'l Tauro, e fui dentro da esso.  
 O gloriose stelle, o lume pregno  
 Di gran virtù, dal quale io riconosco  
 Tutto (qual che si sia) il mio ingegno :  
 Con voi nasceva e s'ascondeva vosco  
 Quegli\* ch'è padre d'ogni mortal vita,  
 Quand'io senti' da prima l'aere Tosco :  
 E poi, quando mi fu grazia largita  
 D'entrar nell'alta ruota che vi gira,  
 La vostra region mi fu sortita.  
 A voi divotamente ora sospira  
 L'anima mia, per acquistar virtute  
 Al passo forte che a se la tira†.”

*Par. xii. 110.*

Beatrice directs Dante to cast his eyes below, and he says,—

“ I straight obey'd ; and with mine eye return'd  
 Through all the seven spheres ; and saw this globe  
 So pitiful of semblance, that perforce  
 It moved my smiles : and him in truth I hold  
 For wisest, who esteems it least ; whose thoughts  
 Elsewhere are fix'd, him worthiest call and best.”

*Cary.*

“ L'ajuola che ci fa tanto feroci,  
 Volgendom'io con gli eterni Gemelli,  
 Tutto m'apparve da' colli alle foci :  
 Poesia rivolsi gli occhi agli occhi belli.”

*Par. xii. 151.*

“ This petty area (o'er the which we stride  
 So fiercely), as along the eternal Twins

---

\* Il Sole. Sol et homo generat hominem.—*Aristotle.*

† Il favellare dell'Empireo ; della Triade ; della ipostatica unione &c.—*Lombardi.*



I wound my way, appear'd before me all,  
 Forth from the havens stretch'd unto the hills.  
 Then, to the beauteous eyes, mine eyes return'd." *Cary.*

Dante observes the eyes of Beatrice intently fixed towards the region of the noonday sun, and describes the action in the following Homeric simile:—

" Come l' augello intra l' amate fronde  
 Posato al nido de' suoi dolci nati  
 La notte che le cose ci nasconde,  
 Che per veder gli aspetti desiati,  
 E per trovar lo cibo onde li pasca,  
 In che i gravi labori gli son grati,  
 Previene 'l tempo in su l' aperta frasca,  
 E con ardente affetto il Sole aspetta,  
 Fiso guardando pur che l' alba nasca ;  
 Così la donna mia sì stava eretta  
 Ed attenta, rivolta inver la plaga  
 Sotto la quale il Sol mostra men fretta :  
 Sì che, veggendola io sospesa e vaga,  
 Fecimi quale è quei che disiando  
 Altro vorria, e sperando s' appaga." *Par. xiii. l.*

" E'en as the bird, who 'midst the leafy bower  
 Has, in her nest, sat darkling through the night,  
 With her sweet brood ; impatient to descry  
 Their wished looks, and to bring home their food,  
 In the fond quest unconscious of her toil :  
 She, of the time prevenient, on the spray,  
 That overhangs their couch, with wakeful gaze  
 Expects the sun ; nor ever, till the dawn,  
 Removeth from the east her eager ken :  
 So stood the dame erect, and bent her glance  
 Wistfully on that region, where the sun  
 Abateth most his speed ; that, seeing her  
 Suspense and wondering, I became as one,  
 In whom desire is waken'd and the hope  
 Of somewhat new to come fills with delight." *Cary.*

The sight so rapturously expected is the triumph of Christ and the Virgin Mary, who descend to this eighth heaven attended by angels and spirits of the blessed. The light grows more and more resplendent, and Beatrice exclaims, "Behold the triumphal hosts of Christ, and all the harvest gathered in, made ripe by these revolving spheres."

"E Beatrice disse: Ecco le schiere."

*Par.* xxiii. 19.

"And Beatrice exclaim'd: 'Behold the host  
Of Christ triumphant; and the plenteous store  
Of fruit which these celestial circles boast.'  
All glowing unto me appear'd her face;  
And eyes so full of joyousness she wore,  
Words would in vain their heavenly lustre trace.  
As when the moon is at the full and clear,  
Diana smiles the eternal Nymphs among,  
Who paint the heavens through every part—so here  
I saw high o'er ten thousand Lamps divine  
A single Sun, that lit up all the throng,  
As doth our sun the stars that round him shine:  
And with such clearness through the living light  
Shone the translucent Substance on mine eyes,  
That they refused to endure the dazzling sight." *Wright.*

The allegory implies that the mind of Dante is unprepared yet to sustain the splendour of the doctrine of the Incarnation,—

"E per la viva luce trasparea  
La lucente sustanzia tanto chiara  
Nel viso mio, che non la sostenea;"

*Par.* xxiii. 31.

the study of theology must first be further prosecuted. The comprehension of the great mystery is reserved for his arrival at the Empyreum, whither the Saviour suddenly retires and



withdraws his overpowering brightness. In the interim Beatrice, whose beauty is inexpressibly augmented by a smile, encourages him to direct his attention to the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and Saints who remain behind the Saviour, and most strongly reflect his lustre.

“ ‘ Apri gli occhi e riguarda qual son io :  
 Tu hai vedute cose, che possente  
 Se’ fatto a sostener lo riso mio.’ ” *Par. xxiii. 46.*

“ ‘ Ope thou thine eyes, and mark me : thou hast seen  
 Things, that empower thee to sustain my smile.’ ”

I was as one when a forgotten dream  
 Doth come across him, and he strives in vain  
 To shape it in his fantasy again ;  
 When as that gracious boon was proffer’d me,  
 Which never may be cancell’d from the book  
 Wherein the past is written. Now, were all  
 Those tongues to sound, that have, on sweetest milk  
 Of Polyhymnia and her sisters, fed  
 And been enrich’d ; yet not with all their help,  
 Unto the thousandth parcel of the truth,  
 My song might shadow forth that saintly smile,  
 And how her saintly aspect it endear’d.  
 And thus in picturing of Paradise,  
 The sacred poem is compell’d to leap,  
 Like one that meets a chasm across his way ;  
 But he who thinks how ponderous the theme,  
 And that ’t is laid upon a mortal shoulder,  
 May pardon, if it tremble with the burden.  
 The track, our venturous keel must furrow, brooks  
 No skiff, or pilot sparing of his toil.  
 ‘ Why doth my face,’ said Beatrice, ‘ thus  
 Enamour thee, as that thou dost not turn  
 Unto the beautiful garden, blossoming

Beneath the rays of Christ? Here is the rose\*,  
 Wherein the Word Divine was made incarnate;  
 And here the lilies†, by whose odour known  
 The way of life was follow'd." *C. W. & L*

The momentary glance which the mental eye of Dante was able to sustain of the hypostatic union, although the memory of it escaped instantly like a dream,

" Io era come quei che si risente  
 Di visione obblita, e che s'ingegna  
 Indarno di ridurlasi alla mente." *Par. xxiii. 49.*

empowered him to soar higher in search of theological truth, and to sound the depths of the doctrines of Christianity as taught by the Apostles and fathers of the church. In a more especial manner his thoughts were turned by Beatrice to the contemplation of the Virgin Mary, the favourite object of his worship, and to whose glory he devotes the remainder of this beautiful Canto (*Par. xxiii.*), where the poet really seems to have cast away all remembrance of the evils and vanities of this world,

" L'ajuola che ci fa tanto feroci." *Par. xxii. 151.*

and to be occupied by visions purely heavenly.

" ' Perchè la faccia mia s'è t'innamora,  
 Che tu non ti rivolgi al bel giardino  
 Che sotto i raggi di Cristo s'infiora?

\* The Virgin Mary is termed by the church, *Rosa Mystica*: "I was exalted like a palm-tree in Engaddi, and as a rose-plant in Jericho."—*Ecclesiasticus*, xxiv. 14.

† The Apostles. "And give ye a sweet savour as frankincense, and flourish as a lily."—*Ecclesiasticus*, xxxix. 14.

Quivi è la rosa in che'l Verbo divino  
Carne si fece; e quivi son li gigli  
Al cui odor si prese'l buon cammino.'

Così Beatrice: ed io, ch' a'suoi consigli  
Tutto era pronto, ancora mi rendei  
Alla battaglia de' debili cigli."

*Par. xxiii. 70.*

" ' Why with my face art thou enamour'd thus,'  
Said Beatrice, ' as that thou dost not turn  
Unto the beautiful garden\*, blossoming  
Beneath the rays of Christ? Here is the rose†,  
Wherein the Word Divine was made incarnate;  
And here the lilies‡, by whose odour§ known  
The way of life was follow'd.' Prompt I heard  
Her bidding, and encounter'd once again  
The strife of aching vision."

*Cary.*

The short descriptive simile which follows, cannot be surpassed in aptness, vividness and pictorial beauty.

" Come a raggio di Sol, che puro mei  
Per fratta nube, già prato di fiori  
Vider, coperti d' ombra gli occhi miei;  
Vid' io così più turbe di splendori  
Fulgurati di su di raggi ardenti,  
Senza veder principio di fulgori.

O benigna virtù che sì gl' imprenti,  
Su t' esaltasti per largirmi loco,  
Agli occhi li che non eran possenti."

*Par. xxiii. 79.*

" As by the sun's pure beam, direct convey'd  
Through broken cloud, a mead of flowers I've seen  
Lit up,—myself the while enwrapt in shade;  
So I beheld full many an orb of light

\* Garden, in Greek Paradise, here the choir of the blessed.

† Rosa Mystica, the Virgin.

‡ Lilies, the Apostles.

§ Odour, preaching.



Shone down upon by rays of brilliant sheen,  
 The source of splendour not reveal'd to sight.  
 O power benign, whose stamp is on these rays!  
 Thou didst exalt thyself the skies above,  
 That my weak vision might endure the blaze." *Wright.*

Dante proceeds to relate the honours paid by the angels to the Virgin; and we must here remark his judgement and taste, in avoiding all description of the persons either of her or of the Saviour, the two, and only two in heaven, in whom the soul and body remain united.

"Con le due stole nel beato chiostro  
 Son le due luci sole che saliro :  
 E questo apporterai nel mondo vostro." *Par. xxv. 127.*

They are represented to us by a metaphor only, being figured merely as splendid stars whose form is left to the reader's imagination. Neither does a word ever proceed from the Godhead or the Virgin. How could the utterance of speech be attributed to either, by an uninspired poet, without danger of derogating from their majesty? Dante notices the practice of Scripture in this respect, but presumes not to copy it.

"Così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno,  
 Perocchè solo da sensato apprende  
 Ciò che fa poscia d'intelletto degno.  
 Per questo la Scrittura condisce  
 A vostra facoltà, e piedi e mano  
 Attribuisce a Dio, ed altro intende :  
 E santa Chiesa con aspetto umano  
 Gabbriel' e Michel vi rappresenta,  
 E l' altro che Tobia rifece sano." *Par. iv. 40.*

"Thus needs, that ye may apprehend, we speak :  
 Since from things sensible alone ye learn



That which, digested rightly, after turns  
 To intellectual. For no other cause  
 The Scripture, condescending graciously  
 To your perception, hands and feet to God  
 Attributes, nor so means: and holy church  
 Doth represent with human countenance  
 Gabriel, and Michael, and him who made  
 Tobias whole."

*Cary.*

The triumph of the Virgin Mary is particularly described in the following passage, and is so poetical and pleasing that we shall give the whole of it with the translation:—

" Il nome del bel fior ch'io sempre invoco  
 E mane e sera, tutto mi ristrinse  
 L'animo ad avvisar lo maggior foco.  
 E come ambo le luci mi dipinse  
 Il quale e 'l quanto della viva stella,  
 Che lassù vince come quaggiù vinse,  
 Perentro il cielo scese una facella  
 Formata in cerchio a guisa di corona,  
 E cinsela e girossi intorno ad ella.  
 Qualunque melodia più dolce suona  
 Quaggiù, ed a se più l'anima tira,  
 Parrebbe nube che squarciata tuona,  
 Comparata al sonar di quella lira  
 Onde s'incoronava il bel zaffiro  
 Del quale il ciel più chiaro s'inzaffira.  
 ' Io sono amore angelico, che giro  
 L'alta letizia che spira del ventre  
 Che fu albergo del nostro disiro:  
 E girerommi, Donna del ciel! mentre  
 Che seguirai tuo Figlio, e farai dia  
 Più la spera suprema, perchè lì entre.'  
 Così la circolata melodia  
 Si sigillava; e tutti gli altri lumi  
 Facean sonar lo nome di Maria.  
 Lo real manto di tutti i volumi

Del mondo, che più ferve e più s' avviva  
Nell' alito di Dio e ne' costumi,

Avea sovra di noi l' interna riva  
Tanto distante, che la sua parvenza  
Là dov' io era, ancor non m' appariva :

Però non ebber gli occhi miei potenza  
Di seguitar la coronata fiamma  
Che si levò appresso a sua semenza.

E come fantolin che 'nver la mamma  
Tende le braccia poi che 'l latte prese,  
Per l' animo che 'n fin di fuor s' infiamma,

Ciascun di quei candori in su si stese  
Con la sua cima sì, che l' alto affetto  
Ch' avieno a Maria mi fu palese.

Indi rimaser lì nel mio cospetto,

*Regina Cœli* cantando sì dolce,

Che mai da me non si partì 'l diletto." *Par. xxiii. 88.*

" The name of that fair flower\* whom I invoke

Ever at eve and morn, drew my whole mind

To recognise her in the goodlier flame.

And, as the bright dimensions of the star

In heaven excelling, as once here on earth,

Were in my eyeballs livelily portray'd ;

Lo ! from within the sky a cresset† fell,

Circling in fashion of a diadem ;

And girt the star : and, hovering, round it wheel'd.

Whatever melody sounds sweetest here,

And draws the spirit most unto itself,

Might seem a rent cloud, when it grates the thunder ;

Compared unto the sounding of that lyre‡,

Wherewith the goodliest sapphire§, that inlays

The floor of heaven, was crown'd. ' Angelic Love

I am, who hovering thus encircle thee

---

\* The Virgin Mary.

† Cresset, the angel Gabriel.

‡ Lyre. The angel Gabriel.

§ Sapphire. The Virgin Mary.



In lofty rapture, from the womb derived  
Where our desire did dwell : and round thee so,  
Lady of heaven ! will hover ; long as thou  
Thy Son shalt follow, and diviner joy  
Shall from thy presence gild the highest sphere.\*

Such close was to the circling melody ;  
And, as it ended, all the other lights  
Took up the strain, and echoed Mary's name.

The robe\*, that with its regal folds enwraps  
The world, and with the nearer breath of God  
Doth burn and quiver, held so far retired  
Its inner hem and skirting over us,  
That yet no glimmer of its majesty  
Had stream'd unto me : therefore were mine eyes  
Unequal to pursue the crowned flame†,  
That towering rose, and sought the seed‡ it bore.  
And like to babe, that stretches forth its arms  
For very eagerness toward the breast,  
After the milk is taken ; so outstretch'd  
Their wavy summits all the fervent band,  
Through zealous love to Mary : then, in view,  
There halted ; and ' Regina Cœli§ ' sang  
So sweetly, my delight hath never ceased."

*Cary.*

We have seen the Saviour ascend in triumph to the empyreum, and the Virgin Mary follow the path of her son and ascend in triumph also to her throne there. St. Peter and the Apostles remain, before whom Dante undergoes the examina-

\* The robe, the ninth heaven, the primum mobile, or crystalline sphere, that enfolds and moves the eight lower heavens.

† The crowned flame, the Virgin with the angel hovering over her.

‡ The seed, our Saviour.

§ Regina Cœli. " The beginning of an anthem sung by the Church at Easter in honour of our Lady."—*Volpi*.

tion on Faith, Hope and Charity, which establishes the soundness of his religious belief. The Apostles also then retire aloft, and Dante's elevation to the next higher region, the ninth heaven, is announced by new charms appearing in the countenance of Beatrice.

" La mente innamorata che donnea  
 Con la mia donna sempre, di ridure  
 Ad essa gli occhi più che mai ardea.  
 E se natura o arte fe' pasture  
 Da pigliar occhi per aver la mente,  
 In carne umana o nelle sue pinture,  
 Tutte adunate parrebber niente  
 Ver lo piacer divin che mi rifulse  
 Quando mi volsi al suo viso ridente.  
 E la virtù che lo sguardo m' indulse,  
 Del bel nido di Leda mi divelse.  
 E nel ciel velocissimo m' impulse." *Par. xviii. 88.*

" The enamour'd mind that ceases not to hold  
 Communion with my Lady, thirsted more  
 Than ever to lead back the eyes to her.  
 And if what art or nature e'er hath made  
 To captivate the eyes and hold the mind,  
 In real or in pictured human form,  
 Were all united, they would seem as nought,  
 Compared to charms divine that shone on me  
 When to her smiling countenance I turn'd.  
 And virtue which that gracious look infused  
 Bore me from Leda's beauteous nest\* away,  
 And snatch'd me upward to the swiftest heaven."

*W. & L.*

Beatrice and Dante are now enfolded by the crystalline sphere, or primum mobile:—

\* The constellation Gemini.



" Lo real manto di tutti i volumi  
 Del mondo, che più ferve e più s' avviva  
 Nell' alito di Dio e ne' costumi." *Par.* xxiii. 112.

\* \* \* \* \*

" La natura del moto che quieta  
 Il mezzo, e tutto l' altro intorno muove,  
 Quinci comincia come da sua meta.  
 E questo cielo non ha altro dove  
 Che la mente divina, in che s' accende  
 L' amor che il volge, e la virtù ch' ei piove.  
 Luce ed amor d' un cerchio lui comprende  
 Sì come questo gli altri, e quel precinto  
 Colui che il cinge solamente intende." *Par.* xxvii. 106.

" The robe that with its regal fold enwraps  
 The volumes\* of the world, and with the breath  
 And beauteousness of God most lively glows." *C. & L.*

\* \* \* \* \*

" Motion, as from its goal commences here,  
 Whose nature is to make the centre rest†,  
 And every other part to move around.  
 No place contains this heaven, save the mind  
 Divine, in whom the love that moves it round  
 Is kindled, and the virtue that it sheds.  
 Of light and love one circle claspeth it,  
 As this doth clasp the others, and the Power  
 Who draws that circle only knows its bound." *C. & L.*

In this ninth heaven a point of inexpressible brightness is beheld, and nine circles are seen revolving round it, ruled by a law the reverse of that which regulates the nine celestial spheres; the motion of the smallest circle, and nearest to the luminous centre, being the most swift, and that of the largest

\* Volumes, the eight lower heavens, enfolded and moved by the *primum mobile*.

† *Natura principium est motûs et quietis.*—Aristotle's *Physics*.

and most distant circle being the slowest. The luminous point is the divine essence; the nine circles compose the celestial hierarchy\*; and the analogies and contrasts of these various symbols furnish a subject to Beatrice for much profound and dark discourse.

Dante endeavours to convey some idea of the countless numbers of the angelic host, and of their nature, in the following lines:—

“ Ed eran tante che il numero loro  
Più che il doppiar degli scacchi s’immilla.”

*Par.* xxviii. 92.

“ In number they outmillion’d the account  
Reduplicate upon the chequer’d board†.”

*Cary.*

“ Questa natura sì oltre s’ingrada.”

*Par.* xxix. 130.

“ No mortal tongue,  
Nor thought of man, hath ever reach’d so far,  
That of these natures he might count the tribes.  
What Daniel‡ of their thousands hath reveal’d  
With finite number, infinite conceals.  
The fountain, at whose source these drink their beams,  
With light supplies them in as many modes,  
As there are splendours that it shines on: each,  
According to the virtue it conceives,  
Differing in love and sweet affection.

\* Hierarchy. See p. xxxi.

† The chess-board has sixty-four squares. If a unit be put on the first square, two on the second, four on the third, and so on, there will be twenty places of figures on the sixty-fourth square.

‡ Daniel. “Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.”—Daniel, vii. 10.



Look then how lofty and in breadth how vast  
 The eternal might, which, broken and dispersed  
 Over such countless mirrors, yet remains  
 Whole in itself and one, as at the first\*."

*Cary.*

The vision of the angelic hierarchy gradually fades away like the stars at daybreak. Dante again turns his eyes on Beatrice, and while enrapt in contemplating her beauty and her smile, they are both taken up to the empyreum.

"Forse semila miglia di lontano."

*Par. xxx. 1.*

"Noon's fervid hour perchance six thousand miles†  
 From hence is distant; and the shadowy cone  
 Almost to level on our earth declines;  
 When from the midmost of this blue abyss,  
 By turns some star is to our vision lost.  
 And straightway as the handmaid of the sun  
 Puts forth her radiant brow, all, light by light,  
 Fade; and the spangled firmament shuts in,  
 E'en to the loveliest of the glittering throng.  
 Thus vanish'd gradually from my sight  
 The triumph, which plays ever round the point,  
 That overcame me, seeming as engirt‡

---

\* One of Dante's longest and most poignant satires is forced into this canto. It is directed against religious impostors and worthless preachers; and is curious as showing that Friar Gerunds were not wanting at that day. His exposure of them is commendable, and would have been suitable in the first act of his drama; but a sudden transition to low comedy, when depicting the sublimities of the ninth heaven, is offensive to good taste.

† Six thousand miles. "He compares the vanishing of the vision to the fading away of the stars at dawn, when it is noon day six thousand miles off, and the shadow, formed by the earth over the part of it inhabited by the Poet, is about to disappear."—*Cary.*

‡ Engirt. "Appearing to be encompassed by these angelic bands, which are in reality encompassed by it."—*Cary.*



By that which it engirdeth, Wherefore love,  
With loss of other object, forced me bend  
Mine eyes on Beatrice once again.

If all that hitherto is told of her,  
Were in one praise concluded, 't were too weak  
To furnish out this turn. Mine eyes did look  
On beauty, such, as I believe in sooth,  
Not merely to exceed our human ; but,  
That save its Maker, none can to the full  
Enjoy it. At this point o'erpower'd I fail,  
Unequal to my theme, as never bard  
Of buskin or of sock hath fail'd before.  
For as the sun doth to the feeblest sight,  
E'en so remembrance of that witching smile  
Hath dispossess'd my spirit of itself.  
Not from that day, when on this earth I first  
Beheld her charms, up to that view of them,  
Have I with song applausive ever ceased  
To follow ; but now follow them no more ;  
My course here bounded, as each artist's is,  
When it doth touch the limit of his skill."

*Cary.*

Dante has here given the last expression of his feelings of delight from looking on the loveliness of Beatrice. The great addition to her charms, that of her smile, was first displayed to him in the eighth sphere.

" Apri gli occhi e riguarda qual son io :  
Tu hai vedute cose, che possente  
Se' fatto a sostener lo riso mio."

*Par. xxiii. 46.*

On arriving at the ninth and last sphere, the beauty of her smiling countenance eclipsed every thing that art or nature ever exhibited in human form.

" Tutte adunate parrebber niente  
Ver lo piacer divin che mi rifulse  
Quando mi volsi al suo viso ridente."

*Par. xxvii. 96.*



But on reaching the empyreum, her charms receive their utmost finish and perfection, and overpower all his faculties.

“ Che, come Sole il viso che più trema,  
Così lo rimembrar del dolce riso  
La mente mia da se medesma scema.” *Par. xxx. 25.*

Beatrice has now granted, in its utmost extent, the prayer which was made to her in the terrestrial paradise by the three theological virtues. She has unveiled to Dante her eyes and face, and displayed her first and second beauty: both the eyes and the lips have smiled on him. In other words, the demonstrations and persuasions of Theology have been fully revealed\*.

“ ‘ Volgi, Beatrice, volgi gli occhi santi,’  
Era la sua canzone ‘ al tuo fedele  
Che per vederti ha mossi passi tanti.  
Per grazia fa noi grazia che disvele  
A lui la bocca tua, sì che discerna  
La seconda bellezza che tu cele.’  
O isplendor di viva luce eterna!  
Chi pallido si fece sotto l’ ombra  
Sì di Parnaso, o bevve in sua cisterna,  
Che non paresse aver la mente ingombra,  
Tentando a render te qual tu paresti  
La deve armonizzando il ciel t’ adombra,  
Quando nell’ aere aperto ti solvesti ? ” *Purg. xxxi. 133.*

“ ‘ Turn, Beatrice,’ the Virtues sung, ‘ O turn  
Thy saintly eyes on this thy faithful one,  
Who, to behold thee, many a weary pace

---

\* We here give a hint at allegories, for an explanation of which the student will find entertainment in consulting the numerous and excellent commentators on the *Commedia*.

Hath measured. Gracious at our prayer, vouchsafe  
 To unveil to him thy face; that he may mark  
 Thy second beauty, now conceal'd.' O splendour!  
 O sacred light eternal! who is he,  
 So pale with musing in Pierian shades,  
 Or with that fount so lavishly imbued,  
 Whose spirit should not fail him in the essay  
 To represent thee such as thou didst seem,  
 When under cope of the still-chiming heaven  
 Thou gavest to open air thy charms reveal'd?" *Cary.*

We have followed the poet and his conductress to the empyreum, the region adverted to in the opening lines of the *Paradiso*.

" La gloria di colui che tutto muove,  
 Per l'universo penetra e risplende  
 In una parte più, e meno altrove.  
 Nel ciel che più della sua luce prende  
 Fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire  
 Nè sa nè può qual di lassù discende:  
 Perchè appressando sè al suo disire  
 Nostro intelletto si profonda tanto  
 Che retro la memoria non può ire.  
 Veramente quant' io del regno santo  
 Nella mia mente potei far tesoro,  
 Sarà ora materia del mio canto." *Par. i. 1.*

" The glory of that Being who all things moves,  
 Pierces the universe, and splendour sheds,  
 In one part more and in another less.  
 Within that heaven where most his light abounds  
 Was I, and witness'd things which to relate  
 Exceeds all power of him who thence descends.  
 For that, so near approaching its desire,  
 Our intellect is to such depth absorb'd,  
 It cannot by the memory be pursued.



Yet whatsoever of that holy realm  
 My mind hath in its treasure-house retain'd  
 Shall now be made the subject of my song." *C. W. & L.*

It is to the empyreum that Beatrice alludes when she resolves the perplexing doubts of Dante respecting degrees of celestial beatitude, after his conversation with Piccarda in the heaven of the moon, the lowest of the spheres and furthest from God.

"De' Serafin' colui che più s'india." *Par. iv. 28.*

"Not Seraphim, who most partakes of God,  
 Moses and Samuel, and either John,  
 Choose which thou wilt, nor even Mary's self\*,  
 Have not in any other heaven their seats,  
 Than have those spirits which so late thou saw'st;  
 Nor more or fewer years exist; but all  
 Make the first circle beauteous, diversely  
 Partaking of sweet life, as more or less  
 Afflation of eternal bliss pervades them.  
 Here were they shown thee, not that fate assigns  
 This for their sphere, but for a sign to thee  
 Of that celestial furthest from the height.  
 Thus must your understanding be address'd;  
 Since solely now by sense is apprehended  
 That which is worthy of deep afterthought." *C. W. & L.*

Thus Dante teaches that there is but one heaven for the spirits of the blessed, where they shine with different degrees of splendour as "one star differeth from another star in glory," and where degrees of enjoyment are different, but where contentment is uniform and perfect; happiness being

\* The Virgin, of whom the church of Rome says "*Exaltata est super choros Angelorum.*"

the result of a spontaneous entire acquiescence in the Divine will.

A glorious vision of a river of light suddenly flashes upon Dante in the empyreum, and communicates at the same instant a power of enduring its amazing brightness.

“ E di novella vista mi raccesi  
Tale, che nulla luce è tanto mera,  
Che gli occhi miei non si fosser difesi :  
E vidi lume in forma di riviera  
Fulvido di fulgori, intra due rive  
Dipinte di mirabil primavera.” *Par. xxx. 58.*

“ New visual power was kindled in mine eyes,  
So that no ray, however pure and bright,  
The vigour of my ken could have subdued.  
And in the likeness of a flood I saw  
Light streaming, from whose amber-seeming waves  
Flash'd up effulgence, as they glided on  
Twixt banks, on either side, painted with spring.”  
*C. W. & L.*

Dante burns with desire to understand these wondrous sights, which are but “prefaces shadowy of the truth they emblem.”

“ *Son di lor vero ombriferi prefazii.*” *Par. xxx. 78.*

But he is told by Beatrice that he must first drink of this river of light.

“ ‘ Ma di quest' acqua convien che tu bei  
Prima che tanta sete in te si sazii :’  
Così mi disse 'l Sol degli occhi miei.” *Par. xxx. 73.*

“ ‘ Before a thirst so great may be allay'd,  
Behoves thee of this limpid stream to drink.’  
So apake to me the day-star of my eyes.” *W. & C.*



Dante bends to the wave, which instantly undergoes a transformation, and both the courts of heaven,\* the angelic and the human, are unfolded to his view. The spirits of the latter are seen on thrones arranged in form of a white rose, illumined by the divine essence, whose brightness is in its centre. The verses descriptive of this new vision are of exquisite beauty—

“ O isplendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi  
 L'alto trionfo del regno verace,  
 Dammi virtude a dir com' io lo vidi.  
 Lume è lassù che visibile face  
 Lo Creatore a quella creatura  
 Che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace :  
 E si distende in circular figura  
 In tanto, che la sua circonferenza  
 Sarebbe al Sol troppo larga cintura.  
 Fassi di raggio tutta sua parvenza,  
 Reflesso al sommo del mobile primo,  
 Che prende quindi vivere e potenza :  
 E, come clivo in acqua di suo imo  
 Si specchia quasi per vedersi adorno,  
 Quanto è nell'erbe e ne' fioretti opimo,  
 Si soprastando al lume intorno intorno  
 Vidi specchiarsi in più di mille soglie  
 Quanto da noi lassù fatto ha ritorno.  
 E, se l' infimo grado in se raccoglie  
 Sì grande lume, quant' è la larghezza  
 Di questa rosa nell'estreme foglie ?  
 La vista mia nell' ampio e nell' altezza  
 Non si smarriva, ma tutto prendeva  
 Il quanto e' l quale di quella allegrezza.

---

\* Both the courts, of angels, that remained faithful, and of beatified souls ; the latter in that form which they will have at the last day. *Cary.*

Presso e lontano lì nè pon nè leva :  
 Che dove Dio senza mezzo governa,  
 La legge natural nulla rilieva.

Nel' giallo della rosa sempiterna,  
 Che si dilata, rigrada, e ridole  
 Odor di lode al Sol che sempre verna.

Qual è colui che tace e dicer vuole,  
 Mi trasse Beatrice, e disse : mira  
 Quanto è 'l convento delle bianche stole." *Par. xxx. 97.*

" O prime enlightener ! thou who gavest me strength  
 On the high triumph of thy realm to gaze ;  
 Grant virtue now to utter what I kenn'd.

There is in heaven a light, whose goodly shine  
 Makes the Creator visible to all  
 Created, that in seeing him alone  
 Have peace ; and in a circle spreads so far,  
 That the circumference were too loose a zone  
 To girdle-in the sun. All is one beam,  
 Reflected from the summit of the first,  
 That moves\*, which being hence and vigour takes.  
 And as some cliff, that from the bottom eyes  
 Its image mirror'd in the crystal flood,  
 As if to admire its brave appareling  
 Of verdure and of flowers ; so, round about,  
 Eyeing the light, on more than million thrones,  
 Stood, eminent, whatever from our earth  
 Has to the skies return'd. How wide the leaves,  
 Extended to their utmost, of this rose,  
 Whose lowest step embosoms such a space  
 Of ample radiance ! Yet, nor amplitude  
 Nor height impeded, but my view with ease  
 Took in the full dimensions of that joy.  
 Near or remote, what there avails, where God  
 Immediate rules, and Nature, awed, suspends

---

\* The Primum Mobile.



Her sway? Into the yellow of the rose  
 Perennial, which, in bright expansiveness,  
 Lays forth its gradual blooming, redolent  
 Of praises to the never-wintering sun,  
 As one, who fain would speak yet holds his peace.  
 Beatrice led me; and, 'Behold,' she said,  
 'This fair assemblage; Stoles of snowy white,  
 How numberless.'"

Cary.

" In forma dunque di candida rosa  
 Mi si mostrava la milizia santa  
 Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.  
 Ma l'altra, che volando vede e canta  
 La gloria di colui che l'innamora,  
 E la bontà che la fece cotanta,  
 Sì come schiera d'api che s'infiora  
 Una fiata, ed altra si ritorna  
 Là dove il suo lavoro s'insapora,  
 Nel gran fior discendeva, che s'adorna  
 Di tante foglie, e quindi risaliva  
 Là dove il suo amor sempre soggiorna." *Par. xxxi. 1.*

\* \* \* \* \*

" Questo sicuro e gaudioso regno,  
 Frequente in gente antica ed in novella,  
 Viso ed amore avea tutto ad un segno.  
 O trina luce, che in unica stella  
 Scintillando a lor vista sì gli appaga,  
 Guarda quaggiuso alla nostra procella." *Par. xxxi. 25.*

" In fashion, as a snow-white rose, lay then  
 Before my view the saintly multitude\*,  
 Which in his own blood Christ espoused. Meanwhile,  
 That other host, † that soar aloft to gaze

---

\* Human souls, advanced to this state of glory through the mediation of Christ. *Cary.*

† The Angels.



And celebrate his glory, whom they love,  
 Hover'd around ; and, like a troop of bees,  
 Amid the vernal sweets alighting now,  
 Now, clustering, where their fragrant labour glows,  
 Flew downward to the mighty flower, or rose  
 From the redundant petals, streaming back  
 Unto the stedfast dwelling of their joy." *Cary.*

• • • • •  
 " The spirits of the ancient days and new,  
 Abounding in that realm of peace and joy,  
 On one sole Point their love and vision fix.  
 O trinal beam, Thyself one single star,  
 That sparkling to their sight thus givest content,  
 Vouchsafe to look upon our storm below." *C. W. & L.*

The bright point whose beams illumine the Empyreum, and  
 are reflected from the face of every angel and of every blessed  
 spirit in the rose, is the divine essence, eternal and im-  
 mutable,—

" Che tal è sempre qual era davante." *Par. xxxiii. 111.*

that comprehends all space and time,

" Ove s' appunta ogni «bi ed ogni quando." *Par. xxix. 12.*

to whom all time is present,—

" A cui tutti li tempi son presenti." *Par. xvii. 17.*

from whom nothing is hidden,—

" Da cui nulla si nasconde." *Par. xxix. 78.*

in whom everything is seen,—

" Dove ogni cosa dipinta si vede." *Par. xxiv. 42.*

" Tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno." *Par. xvii. 39.*

on whom all things depend,—



“ Da quel punto  
Dipende il Cielo e tutta la natura.” *Par.* xxviii. 41.

That Point is the Holy Trinity.

“ Quell’ uno e due e tre che sempre vive,  
E regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,  
Non circoscritto, e tutto circoscrive.” *Par.* xiv. 28.

There are many expressions in Dante’s description of the magnificent vision of the Empyreum which might have suggested ideas to Ludovico Paterno in his sonnet on the Deity, which Muratori\* has given as one of the masterpieces of Italian poetry.

“ Dio.

“ Dio, che infinito in infinito movi  
Non mosso†; e increato e festi, e fai;  
Dio, ch’ in Abisso, e ’n Terra, e ’n Ciel ti trovi;  
E ’n te Cielo, e ’n te Terra, e ’n te Abiss’ hai;  
Dio, che mai non invecchi, e innovi mai;  
E quel, ch’ è, quel, che fu, quel, che fia, provi;  
Nè mai soggetto a tempi o vecchi, o novi;  
Te stesso contemplando il tutto sai;  
Ineffabil Virtù, Splendore interno,  
Ch’ empj, e allumi il benedetto chiostro;  
Sol, che riscaldi, e infiammi e buoni e rei;  
Tanto più grande all’ intelletto nostro,  
Immortale, invisibile, e eterno,  
Quanto che non compreso, il Tutto sei.” *L. Paterno.*

Muratori considers the sonnet of Francesco de Lemene on the same subject to rival that of Paterno,—

\* Della Perfetta Poesia. Vol. ii. p. 422.

† Non mosso. ‘*Stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri.*’—*Boezio.* ‘Primo movente immobile.’ (Arist. nella Metafisica.)—*Salvini.*

## “ LA TRINITÀ.

“ Eterno Sol, che luminoso e vago,  
 Sei troppo fosco a lo 'ntelletto mio,  
 Di, come sei di te medesimo pago,  
 E tre persone un gran mente unio ?  
 In te specchi te stesso, e d' arder vago  
 De l' immagine che formi, è il tuo desio ;  
 Ma non men di te stesso è Dio l' immagine.  
 Nè men l' ardore onde tu l' ami, è Dio.  
 Così tu, fatto trino, equal ti miri ;  
 E quella immagine, e quel beato ardore  
 Che generi mirando, amando spiri.  
 In tre lumi distinto è il tuo splendore,  
 Come distinta in tre colori è un' Iri ;  
 E sei tu solo Amante, Amato, Amore.” *F. de Lemene.*

The sonnet of Giovanbattista Zappi is scarcely inferior to either of the preceding, and is in perfect unison with the language of Dante :—

## “ LA TRINITÀ.

“ Lucido Sol,\* che non derivi altronde  
 Che da Te stesso ; ampia cagion primiera ;  
 L' unica cui virtude in tre s' infonde  
 Per sì meravigliosa alta maniera.  
 Tu nel tuo Figlio, il Figlio in Te si asconde ;  
 Egli e tu nello Spirto. O sola, e vera  
 Gran Deità che il suo poter diffonde ;  
 Ma in tre diffusa, in ciascun regna intera.

---

\* Lucido Sol. The propriety of comparing the Trinity to the Sun is supported by the following words of St. Augustine, directed against the Arians :—“ Videmus Solem in Cœlo currentem, fulgentem, calentem ; similiter ignis tria habet, hoc est motum, lucem, et fervorem ; divide ergo si potes, Arriane, Solem, vel ignem, et tunc divide Trinitatem. (*Aug. de verb. Dom.*)”



Eterno immenso Padre, eterno immenso  
 Figlio, immenso, ed eterno Amor, che ardendo  
 Nel seno d' ambiduo, sei Dio con loro :  
 A voi mi innalzo, in voi mi affiso, e penso ;  
 Ma quanto più a voi penso, io men v' intendo ;  
 E quanto men v' intendo, io più vi adoro."\* G. Zappi.

The subject of these noble sonnets almost entirely occupies the three last cantos of the *Commedia*. It is the most difficult to treat of becomingly that could possibly be chosen, and the judgment and skill displayed by the poet in the execution of the task he imposed upon himself excites our highest admiration.

The reader will observe that we have carried him back to the scene in the sacred drama where he was first presented with a view of the glorified spirits in the Empyreum† arranged on thrones in form of a vast expanded rose, at the moment when Dante discovered that Beatrice had vanished, and that in her stead, St. Bernard was at his side, consoling him with saying that he was come, by her desire, to terminate his wishes.

" A terminar lo tuo desiro  
 Mosse Beatrice me del luogo mio." Par. xxxi. 65.

We have been induced to stray from that scene far and wide, captivated by the beauty of various objects, and desirous of

\* This is the duty of the true christian as laid down by St. Augustin :—  
 " Qui hoc Trinitatis mysterium, vel ex parte, vel per speculum, et in ænigmate videt, gaudeat cognoscens Deum, et gratias agat : qui vero non videt, tendat per pietatem ad videndum, non per cæcitatem ad calumniandum ; quoniam unus est Deus, sed tamen Trinitas (*Aug. I. de Trin.*)"

† See pp. clvii, clxxxiii, clxxxv.

making them known to others and of imparting our own delight; but never forgetting the main purpose of this essay, which is to show that religion is the predominant element and scope of the *Commedia*, and that the Romanism of Dante's faith is unquestionable.

The mind of Dante, notwithstanding all that Beatrice had taught and shown him, was still unsatisfied; though he had 'drawn empyreal air,'\* and beheld the heavenly host, '*l'una e l'altra milizia di Paradiso*', and even that luminous point which is the divine, omnipresent essence, '*lo raggio Dell'alta luce che da se è vera*'; he thirsts for angelic knowledge, and for a demonstration of that threefold mystery, '*la trina luce in unica stella*,' which his creed and reason had taught and convinced him is beyond the reach of human intellect; he thirsts to comprehend the Trinity, and the union of the two natures, the human and divine. To gratify this wish is the object of St. Bernard's mission,† but how can it possibly be accomplished? We are astonished at the poet's daring and tremble for his success. Our curiosity is excited to the utmost; we know that it cannot be satisfied, and fear lest the poem should

\* The poet could not forbear introducing a little satirical trait even when in the Empyreum. It is the last that occurs in the *Commedia*.

"Io che era al divino dall'umano,  
E all'eterno dal tempo venuto,  
E di Firenze in popol giusto e sano.  
Di che stupor dovea esser compiuto!" *Par. xxxi. 37.*

† A poetical mode of saying that theology could teach Dante nothing more, and that contemplation alone can enable a human mind to make any approach to a conception of the great Christian mystery. See the old Commentators.

be stained by irreverence if not with impiety ; but with Dante there was no danger, and he leaves us full of admiration at the skilful and sublime manner in which he overcomes his difficulty.

St. Bernard first directs Dante to raise his eyes to the summit of the Rose, and to regard the blessed Virgin on her throne, through whose favour and intercession only he can be enabled to look on the Saviour,—

“ Riguarda omai nella faccia ch’ a Cristo  
Più s’ assomiglia, che la sua chiarezza  
Sola ti può disporre a veder Cristo.

Io vidi sovra lei tanta allegrezza  
Piover, portata nelle menti sante  
Create a trasvolar per quella altezza,  
Che, quantunque io avea visto davante,  
Di tanta ammirazion non mi sospese,  
Nè mi mostrò di Dio tanto sembante.

E quell’ amor che primo lì discese,  
Cantando *Ave, Maria, gratia plena* ;  
Dinanzi a lei le sue ali distese.

Rispose alla divina cantilena  
Da tutte parte la beata corte  
Sì ch’ ogni vista sen fe’ più serena.”

*Par. xxxii. 85.*

“ Now raise thy view  
Unto the visage most resembling Christ :  
For, in her splendour only, shalt thou win  
The power to look on him. Forthwith I saw  
Such floods of gladness on her visage shower’d,  
From holy spirits, winging that profound ;  
That, whatsoever I had yet beheld,  
Had not so much suspended me with wonder,  
Or shown me such similitude of God.  
And he, who had to her descended, once  
On earth, now hail’d in heaven ; and on poised wing,

'Ave, Maria, Gratia Plena,' sang :  
 To whose sweet anthem all the blissful court,  
 From all parts answering, rang : that holier joy  
 Brooded the deep serene."

Cary.

The Virgin Mary is invoked by Petrarch in his celebrated Canzone, *Vergine bella che di Sol vestita*, by the title of *Vera Beatrice*, the true bestower of beatitude, and in that expression he might possibly not only have his Laura in view but the Beatrice of Dante, who in her angelic character in the Paradiso, and as we see her enthroned near the Virgin in the Rose, is an apotheosis of the poet's love, whom he places next in his holy affection to the True Beatrice, and Queen of heaven of the Church of Rome. The thoughts in this canzone of Petrarch are so similar to those of a prayer of St. Bernard which we are soon to hear that we shall give the fourth stanza,—

"Vergine santa, d'ogni grazia piena,  
 Che per vera ed altissima umiltate  
 Salisti al ciel, onde miei preghi ascolti,  
 Tu partoristi il fonte di pietate,  
 E di giustizia il sol, che rasserena  
 Il secol pien d'errori oscuri e folti ;  
 Tre dolci e cari nomi ha' in te raccolti,  
 Madre, figliuola, e sposa ;  
 Vergine gloriosa,  
 Donna del re che nostri lacci ha sciolti,  
 E fatto 'l mondo libero e felice,  
 Nelle cui sante piaghe  
 Prego ch' appaghe il cor, Vera Beatrice."\* *Canz.* viii. p. 2.

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\* In the sonnet of Petrarch '*Siccome eterna vita è veder Dio*' which extols the bliss conferred on the poet by the sight of Laura, is the line, '*Dolce*

St. Bernard points out to Dante some distinguished spirits enthroned in the Rose, then adds:—

“ Ma perchè 'l tempo fugge che t'assonna,  
 Qui farem punto, come buon sartore  
 Che, com'egli ha del panno, fa la gonna : \*  
 E drizzeremo gli occhi al primo amore  
 Sì che, guardando verso lui, penetri,  
 Quant'è possibil per lo suo fulgore.  
 Veramente, nè forse, tu t'arretti  
 Movendo l'ali tue, credeudo oltrarti :  
 Orando, grazia convien che s'impetri ;  
 Grazia da quella che puote ajutarti :  
 E tu mi seguirai con l'affezione,  
 Sì che dal dicer mio lo cuor non parti :  
 E cominciò questa santa orazione.” *Par. xxxii.*

“ ‘ But (for the vision hasteneth to an end)  
 Here break we off, as the good workman doth,  
 That shapes the cloak according to the cloth ;  
 And to the primal love our ken shall rise ;  
 That thou mayst penetrate the brightness, far  
 As sight can bear thee. Yet, alas ! in sooth

---

*del mio pensier ora beatrice,* (playing upon the word Laura, ora, aura, l'aura.) These examples of the use of the word *beatrice* may be taken as additions, fanciful ones perhaps to the many proofs given by Professor Rossetti of a similitude in the Laura of Petrarch and the Beatrice of Dante, both of whom are considered by him as purely allegorical.

\* This homely simile is not agreeable to modern taste, but is characteristic of Dante. There is a similar one, taken also from the *sartore*, in the *Inferno* :—

“ Ci riguardava, come suol da sera  
 Guardar l'un l'altro sotto nuova luna,  
 E sì ver noi aguzzavan le ciglia  
 Come vecchio sartor fa nella cruna.” *Inf. xv. 18.*



Beating the pennons, thinking to advance,  
Thou backward fall'’st. Grace then must first be gain'd ;  
Her grace, whose might can help thee. Thou in prayer  
Seek her : and, with affection, whilst I sue,  
Attend, and yield me all thy heart.’ He said ;  
And thus the saintly orison began.” *Cary.*

" PARADISO.—Canto xxxiii.

“ Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,	
Umile ed alta più che creatura,	
Termine fisso d’ eterno consiglio,	3
Tu se’ colei che l’ umana natura	
Nobilitasti sì, che ’l suo fattore	
Non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.	6
Nel ventre tuo si raccese l’ amore	
Per lo cui caldo nell’ eterna pace	
Così è germinato questo fiore.	9
Quel se’ a noi meridiana face	
Di caritate, e giusto intra mortali	
Se’ di speranza fontana vivace.	12

1 Vergine Madre. *Genuisti qui te fecit. La Chiesa. Del tuo parto gentili agnola e madre.*—Petr.

**2 Umile ed alta. Per vera ed altissima umiltade salisti al cielo.—Petr.**

**3 Termine.** Disegnata e prescelta dall' eterno consiglio di Dio, per madre del suo figliuolo. *Ab æterno ordinata sum.*—Prov.

4 Tu. V. la Canz. del Petr. a Maria.

6 Fattura. Cioè di essa umana natura. *Non horruisti Virginis uterum.*  
—La Chiesa.

**7 Raccese.** Per l'incarnazione del Verbo si riaccese l'amore di Dio intiepidito per il fallo d'Adamo.

**9 Fiore.** Questa rosa di anime beate in questa pace del Paradiso.

**10 Face. Il Sole a mezzo dì.**

**12 Speranza. *Spes nostra.*—La Chiesa.**

Donna, se' tanto grande, e tanto vali, Che qual vuol grazia e a te non ricorre, Sua disianza vuol volar senz' ali.	15
La tua benignità non pur soccorre A chi dimanda, ma molte fiate Liberamente al dimandar precorre.	18
In te misericordia, in te pietate, In te magnificenza, in te s' aduna Quantunque in creatura è di bontate.	21
Or questi, che dall' infima lacuna Dell' universo infin quì ha vedute Le vite spiritali ad una ad una,	24
Supplica a te per grazia di virtute Tanto che possa con gli occhi levarsi Più alto verso l' ultima salute.	27
Ed io, che mai per mio veder non arsi Più ch' io fo per lo suo, tutti i miei prieghi Ti porgo, e prego che non sieno scarsi :	30
Perchè tu ogni nube gli dislegghi Di sua mortalità co' prieghi tuoi, Sì che 'l sommo piacer gli si dispiegghi.	33

---

14 Qual. *Qualunque*.

16 Benignità. Liberalitade. Ott. *Liberalità vera è dare non chiesto*.—  
Arist. nell Etica.

18 Liberamente. *Spontaneamente*.

21 Quantunque. *Quanto mai*.

22 Questi. *Dante*. Lacuna. Il basso centro dell' Inferno. *Lacum leonum*.  
—Dan. vi.

24 Vite. Le anime dannate, purganti, beate.

27 Ultima. *Principium et finis*. Apoc. *Dio*, da cui ogni nostra salute ha  
origine.

29 Più. *Diliges proximum sicut teipsum*. Questa legge è perfetta su 'n  
cielo.

30 Scarsi. Inefficaci.

31 Dislegghi. *Solvere nubem*.—Lat.

33 Il sommo piacer. *Dio*.

Ancor ti prego, Regina, che puoi  
 Ciò che tu vuoi, che gli conservi sani,  
 Dopo tanto veder, gli affetti suoi. 36  
 Vinca tua guardia i movimenti umani :  
 Vedi Beatrice con quanti beati  
 Per li miei prieghi ti chiudon le mani." 39

" PARADISE.—Canto xxxiii.

" O Virgin mother, daughter of thy Son !  
 Created beings all in lowliness  
 Surpassing, as in height above them all ;  
 Term by the eternal counsel preordain'd ;  
 Ennobler of thy nature, so advanced  
 In thee, that its great Maker did not scorn,  
 To make himself his own creation ;  
 For in thy womb rekindling shone the love  
 Reveal'd, whose genial influence makes now  
 This flower to germinate in eternal peace :  
 Here thou to us, of charity and love,  
 Art, as the noonday torch ; and art, beneath,  
 To mortal men, of hope a living spring.  
 So mighty art thou, lady, and so great,  
 That he, who grace desireth, and comes not  
 To thee for aidance, fain would have desire  
 Fly without wings. Nor only him, who asks  
 Thy bounty, succours ; but doth freely oft  
 Forerun the asking. Whatsoe'er may be  
 Of excellence in creature, pity mild,  
 Relenting mercy, large munificence,  
 Are all combined in thee. Here kneeleth one,  
 Who of all spirits hath review'd the state,

---

35 Sani. *Mens sana*.—Juv.

37 I movimenti—dell' umana natura corrotta che al male ne inclina.

39 Chiudon le mani. Conforme al pio costume di tenere nell' orare le mani congiunte davanti al petto.



From the world's lowest gap unto this height.  
 Suppliant to thee he kneels, imploring grace  
 For virtue yet more high; to lift his ken  
 Toward the bliss supreme. And I, who ne'er  
 Coveted sight, more fondly, for myself,  
 Than now for him, my prayers to thee prefer,  
 (And pray they be not scant) that thou wouldst drive  
 Each cloud of his mortality away;  
 That on the sovran pleasure he may gaze.  
 This also I entreat of thee, O queen!  
 Who canst do what thou wilt; that in him thou  
 Wouldst, after all he hath beheld, preserve  
 Affection sound, and human passions quell.  
 Lo! where, with Beatrice, many a saint  
 Stretch their clasp'd hands, in furtherance of my suit."

*Cary.*

If the antipapal satire of the *Commedia*, and its liberal spirit, approaching on some points to protestantism, should create a doubt as to the religious creed of Dante, this prayer of St. Bernard, in which Dante fervently joins, and which contains the pith of the various hymns dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the Roman breviary, might be adduced as conclusive.

The poet tells us that the prayer was graciously heard, that his visual power became still more perfect, and penetrated deeper into the light of the divine essence; but that memory cannot trace what he saw; that it has vanished like a dream, leaving only a sweet but indistinct and indescribable impression.

" Gli occhi da Dio dilette e venerati  
 Fissi negli orator ne dimostraro  
 Quanto i devoti prieghi le son grati.

42

---

40 Gli occhi della Vergine, dilette da Dio, come di sposa e figliuola, e venerati come di Madre.

41 Orator. S. Bernardo.

Indi all' eterno lume si drizzaro, Nel qual non si può creder che s' invii Per creatura l' occhio tanto chiaro.	45
Ed io, che al fine di tutti i disii M' appropinquava, sì com' io doveva, L' ardor del desiderio in me finii.	48
Bernardo m' accennava, e sorrideva, Perch' io guardassi in suso : ma io era Già per me stesso tal qual ei voleva :	51
Che la mia vista, venendo sincera, E più e più entrava per lo raggio Dell' alta luce che da se è vera.	54
Da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio Che 'l parlar nostro ch' a tal vista cede, E cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio.	57
Quale è colui che somniando vede, E dopo 'l sogno la passione impressa Rimane, e l' altro alla mente non riede :	60
Cotal son io, che quasi tutta cessa Mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla Nel cuore il dolce che nacque da essa :	63
Così la neve al Sol si disigilla :	

43 Eterno lume. Dio.

46 Al fine. A Dio.

48 Finii. Mi si quietò il desiderio.

51 Tal. Cioè già contemplavo la divina essenza.

54 Vera. Da se è vera, nè da altra luce ha il suo essere : nè risplende per partecipazione come ogni altra luce fuori di lei.

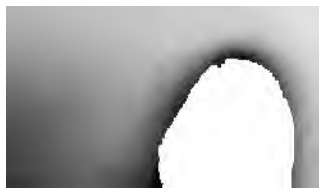
55 Maggio. Fu maggiore che il nostro parlare. Per quanto sia uno nel favellare espressivo, non potrà mai qual fosse allora la mia visione esprimere.

57 Oltraggio. Eccesso d' altezza, da oltre.

59 Passione impressa. L' affanno o l' allegrezza cagionata dal sogno.

60 L' altro. L' immagine del sogno svanisce, ma l' impressione di piacere o d' affanno rimane.

64 Si disigilla. Si strugge come fa al fuoco la cera del sigillo.



Così al vento nelle foglie lievi  
 Si perde la sentenza di Sibilla."

66

"The eyes, that heaven with love and awe regards,  
 Fix'd on the suitor, witness'd, how benign  
 She looks on pious prayers: then fasten'd they  
 On the everlasting light, wherein no eye  
 Of creature, as may well be thought, so far  
 Can travel inward. I, meanwhile, who drew  
 Near to the limit, where all wishes end,  
 The ardour of my wish (for so behoved)  
 Ended within me. Beckoning smiled the sage,  
 That I should look aloft: but, ere he bade,  
 Already of myself aloft I look'd;  
 For visual strength, refining more and more,  
 Bare me into the ray authential  
 Of sovran light. Thenceforward, what I saw,  
 Was not for words to speak, nor memory's self  
 To stand against such outrage on her skill.

As one, who from a dream awaken'd, straight  
 All he hath seen forgets; yet still retains  
 Impression of the feeling in his dream;  
 E'en such am I: for all the vision dies,  
 As it were, away; and yet the sense of sweet,  
 That sprang from it, still trickles in my heart.  
 Thus in the sun-thaw is the snow unseal'd;  
 Thus in the winds on fitting leaves was lost  
 The Sibyl's sentence."

Cary.

The poet expresses the most ardent desire to be able to recall and to transmit a slight image of what he beheld, though it were but the faintest spark of its glory; for the Beatific Vision was then unfolded to him.

66 Sibilla. La Sibilla Cuma, dice Virgilio, notava i suoi oracoli nelle foglie degli alberi, onde erano dispersi dal vento, nè, potevano più raccozzarsi e leggersi.

“ O somma luce, che tanto ti lievi Da' concetti mortali, alla mia mente Ripresta un poco di quel che parevi :	69
E fa la lingua mia tanto possente, Ch' una favilla sol della tua gloria Possa lasciare alla futura gente :	72
Che per tornare alquanto a mia memoria, E per sonare un poco in questi versi, Più si conceperà di tua vittoria.	75
Io credo per l' acume ch' io soffersi Del vivo raggio, ch' io sarei smarrito Se gli occhi miei da lui fossero avversi.	78
E mi ricorda ch' io fui più ardito Per questo a sostener tanto, ch' io giunsi L' aspetto mio col valore infinito.”	81

“ O eternal beam !

(Whose height what reach of mortal thought may soar ?)

Yield me again some little particle

Of what thou then appear'dst ; give my tongue

Power, but to leave one sparkle of thy glory

Unto the race to come, that shall not lose

Thy triumph wholly, if thou waken aught

Of memory in me, and endure to hear

The record sound in this unequal strain.

Such keenness from the living ray I met,

That, if mine eyes had turn'd away, methinks,

67 Ti lievi. T' innalzi sopra.

69 Parevi—quando io ti rimirai.

75 Vittoria. Più si conceperà quanto la tua somma luce superi ogni creato e creabile intelletto.

78 Avversi. V. Luc. ix. 62. Più si guarda in Dio e più l' occhio rinforza.

79 Ardito. E per questo timore di non abbagliarmi la vista e smarrirmi, mi feci più animo e coraggio a reggere e soffrir tanto l' acume del raggio divino, siechè finalmente congiunsi ed unii la mia virtù visiva coll' infinita eccellenza di quell' oggetto.



I had been lost ; but so embolden'd, on  
 I pass'd, as I remember, till my view  
 Hover'd the brink of dread infinitude."

Cary.

In the glories of the Beatific Vision his sight was exhausted and consumed. He ventures however to say that, in the profundity of the eternal light, he saw all that the universe contains—all substance, accident, and their properties,—knit together in one bond of love. But in an instant the memory of what he saw was obliterated so, that five-and-twenty centuries, which have elapsed since the expedition of the Argonauts, have not produced an oblivion of that event so complete as his of the wonders which he then beheld.

" O abbondante grazia, ond' io presunsi Ficar lo viso per la luce eterna Tanto, che la veduta vi consunsi !	84
Nel suo profondo vidi che s' interna Legato con amore in un volume Ciò che per l' universo si squaderna :	87
Sustanza ed accidente e lor costume, Tutti conflati insieme per tal modo, Che ciò ch' io dico è un semplice lume.	90

84 Consunsi. Altri intende *compiti*, altri, *la vista si smarrì*.

85 Vidi. Il mondo è quasi cimento della divinità.

86 Volume, Delle immutabili idee. Dio.

87 Squaderna. Quanto per tutto l' universo si spande ; cioè tutte le creature.

88 Sustanza, Tutto ciò che per se sussiste. Accidente, tutto ciò che tiene sua sussistenza da altra cosa. Costume, proprietà, o modo di agire.

89 Conflati, uniti.

90 Lume, cioè, barlume.



La forma universal di questo nodo  
 Credo ch'io vidi, perchè più di largo,  
 Dicendo questo, mi sento ch'io godo. 93  
 Un punto solo m'è maggior letargo  
 Che venticinque secoli alla 'mpresa  
 Che fe' Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo." 96

"O grace, unenvying of thy boon ! that gavest  
 Boldness to fix so earnestly my ken  
 On the everlasting splendour, that I look'd,  
 While sight was unconsumed ; and, in that depth,  
 Saw in one volume clasp'd of love, whate'er  
 The universe unfolds ; all properties  
 Of substance and of accident, beheld  
 Compounded, yet one individual light  
 The whole. And of such bond methinks I saw  
 The universal form ; for that whene'er  
 I do but speak of it, my soul dilates  
 Beyond her proper self ; and, till I speak,  
 One moment seems a longer lethargy,  
 Than five-and-twenty ages had appear'd  
 To that emprise, that first made Neptune wonder  
 At Argo's shadow darkening on his flood." Cary.

Still was his mind fixed and immovable, and more and more  
 intently directed to that Light ; for there only is pefection,  
 and goodness itself, and happiness, the end and object of our  
 being.

"Così la mente mia tutta sospesa  
 Mirava fissa immobile ed attenta,

---

91 Forma universale, perchè Dio è forma informante tutte le creature.  
 Dice *nodo*, perchè sopra ha detto *legato con amore*.

92 Di largo. Largamente. Il cuore mi si allarga per letizia.

94 Punto. La sessanta parte d'un' ora, o piuttosto un minimo punto di  
 tempo. Vedi i comentatori sopra *maggior letargo*.



- E sempre di mirar faceasi accesa. 99  
 A quella luce cotal si diventa,  
 Che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto  
 E impossibil che mai si consenta : 102  
 Perocchè 'l ben, ch'è del volere obbietto,  
 Tutto s' accoglie in lei ; e fuor di quella  
 E difettiva ciò che lì è perfetto." 105
- " With fixed heed, suspense and motionless,  
 Wondering I gazed ; and admiration still  
 Was kindled, as I gazed. It may not be,  
 That one, who looks upon that light, can turn  
 To other object, willingly, his view.  
 For all the good, that will may covet, there  
 Is summ'd ; and all, elsewhere defective found,  
 Complete."

New miracles present themselves, but to convey an idea of them his language must be more imperfect, he says, than that of an infant at the breast. It was still Unity that he looked upon, yet he beheld the Trinity.

- " Omai sarà più corta mia favella,  
 Pure a quel ch' io ricordo, che d' infante  
 Che bagni ancor la lingua alla mammella. 108  
 Non perchè più ch' un semplice sembante  
 Fosse nel vivo lume ch' io mirava,  
 Che tal è sempre qual era davante : 111  
 Ma per la vista che s' avvalorava

---

99 Accesa. Augent spiritalis deliciæ desiderium in mente dum satiant.  
 —S. Greg. Hom. xxvi.

101 Aspetto. Per rimirar qualunque altra cosa.

103 Il ben. La volontà umana è sempre rivolta al bene. In Dio sono tutti i beni ; perciò in Dio si acqueta ogni desio.

111 Tal. *Uno manendo in sè come davanti.* (C. xxix.) Immotus in te permanens.—La Chiesa.

In me guardando una sola parvenza,  
 Mutandom' io, a me si travagliava : 114  
 Nella profonda e chiara sussistenza  
 Dell' alto lume parvemi tre giri  
 Di tre colori e d' una contenenza : 117  
 E l' un dall' altro, come Iri da Iri,  
 Parea riflesso : e 'l terzo parea fuoco  
 Che quinci e quindi igualmente si spiri. 120  
 O quanto è corto 'l dire, e come fioco  
 Al mio concetto ! e questo a quel ch' io vidi  
 E tanto, che non basta a dicer poco." 123

" My tongue shall utter now, no more  
 E'en what remembrance keeps, than could the babe's,  
 That yet is moisten'd at his mother's breast.  
 Not that the semblance of the living light  
 Was changed (that ever as at first remain'd),  
 But that my vision quickening, in that sole  
 Appearance, still new miracles descried,  
 And toil'd me with the change. In that abyss  
 Of radiance, clear and lofty, seem'd, methought,  
 Three orbs of triple hue, clipt in one bound :  
 And from another, one reflected seem'd,  
 As rainbow is from rainbow : and the third

114 Mutandom' io. Quella, rispetto a me, si cangiava e alterava.

116 Giri. S. Agostino (Civ. Dei) narra che Mercurio Trismegisto dipin-  
 geva Dio come una sfera, che ha dappertutto il centro, e la circonferenza in  
 luogo nessuno. Tre giri. Le tre persone.

" Che quella viva luce che si mea  
 Dal suo lucente, che non si disuna  
 Da lui, nè dall' Amor che 'n lor s' intrea." *Par. xiii. 55.*

118 L' un. Il Figliuolo dal Padre. Lumen de lumine. La Chiesa.

119 Il terzo. Lo Spirito santo. *Qui ex patre filioque procedit.* La Chiesa.

123 Poco. Essendo ancora molto meno che poco.

Seem'd fire, breathed equally from both. O speech !  
 How feeble and how faint art thou, to give  
 Conception birth ! Yet this to what I saw  
 Is less than little."

*Cary.*

Still another wondrous mystery remains untold, that of the incarnation. The poet can only express his sense of its utter incomprehensibility ; and he has presumed only to declare that he thought he saw the semblance of a union human and divine, and that the mystery, as far as it can be understood by a created being, was made known to him.

" O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,  
 Sola t' intendi, e da te intelletta  
 Ed intendente te ami ed arridi : 126  
 Quella circolazion, che sì concetta  
 Pareva in te, come lume riflesso,  
 Dagli occhi miei alquanto circonspecta, 129  
 Dentro da se del suo colore istesso  
 Mi parve pinta della nostra effige :  
 Perchè 'l mio viso in lei tutto era messo." 132

" O eternal light !  
 Sole in thyself that dwell'st, and understood  
 By thee, art understood by thee alone ;  
 And understanding thee hast love and joy !  
 That second circle which appear'd in thee  
 Conceived, like second and reflected light  
 Was by mine eyes consider'd for a while ;  
 And I therein, methought, in its own hue

124 Sidi. Siedi, stai. Dio è sostanza a sè stesso.

127 Circolazione. Quel secondo giro. Il Figliuolo.

129 Circonspecta. Guardata bene attorno.

130 Suo colore. Divinità di G. C. Id quod fuit permansit, et quod non erat assumpsit.—La Chiesa.

Beheld our image painted : stedfastly  
I therefore pored upon the view."

**Cary.**

He confesses his intense anxiety to see more, and to comprehend where and how the inconceivable union of the two natures could have place; but no further knowledge could be conceded. The last and best gift of Providence, however, was conferred upon him—perfect contentment. An intellectual ray darted on his mind which terminated all desire and perfected his will. Thenceforth it conformed itself to the will of that Being who is all power, wisdom and goodness, and like a wheel rolled onward—

“ In even motion, by the love impell’d,  
That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.”

“Qual è il geometra che tutto s’affige  
 Per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritruova,  
 Pensando, quel principio ond’ egli indige; 135  
 Tale era io a quella vista nuova :  
 Veder voleva come si convenne  
 L’imago al cerchio, e come vi s’indova : 138  
 Ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne :  
 Se non che la mia mente fu percossa  
 Da un fulgore, in che sua voglia venne. 141

All'alta fantasia quì mancò possa :  
 Ma già volgeva il mio disiro e 'l *velle*,  
 Sì come ruota che igualmente è mossa, 144  
 L'amor che muove il Sole e l'altre stelle."

"As one,  
 Who versed in geometric lore, would fain  
 Measure the circle ; and though pondering long  
 And deeply, that beginning which he needs,  
 Finds not : e'en such was I, intent to scan  
 The novel wonder, and trace out the form,  
 How to the circle fitted, and therein  
 How placed : but the flight was not for my wing ;  
 Had not a flash darted athwart my mind,  
 And, in the spleen, unfolded what it sought.  
 Here vigour fail'd the towering fantasy :  
 But yet the will roll'd onward, like a wheel  
 In even motion, by the love impell'd,  
 That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars." Cary.

Thus Dante concludes the *Commedia*, his Vision of the temporal and eternal state of Man, "The journey of his soul to God ;" the ample confession of his affections and aversions ; his wishes, hopes, fears and doubts ; his insatiable desire of knowledge, even of understanding those mysteries of his religion, which must ever remain impenetrable and incompre-

142 Fantasia. Dio non voleva che di tal' immagine si arricchisse la mia fantasia, e ne tramandassi qualche memoria ai posteri.

143 Volgeva. Iddio volgeva il mio desiderio e il mio volere concordemente al volere di lui, siccome ruota che in ogni sua parte egualmente è mossa ; sì che io del manere della mia fantasia fui contento. *Mi acquietai nel volere di Dio. "Invento principio seu primo, videlicet Deo, nihil est quod ulterius quæatur ; quum sit alpha et omega, id est, principium et finis."*  
 —Dante, Lit. ad K. G.

hensible: and he thus teaches us, by his example, that even these mysteries may be wisely and profitably contemplated, and that the study of the Deity is the sure road by which to arrive, even in this life, at a Paradise of the mind.

In descending with Dante through the abyss of impenitent guilt, we are depressed by his notes of woe:—

“ Quivi sospiri, pianti, ed alti guai.” *Inf.* iii. 22.

In climbing with him through the region of atonement, the accents of hope cheer us, and resound so sweetly:—

“ Che la dolcezza ancor dentro ci suona.” *Purg.* ii. 114.

In following him through the realms of bliss we see him soar higher and higher; and as he mounts, like the lark to heaven, he delights us with his song of joy, then trills out his last sweet melody contented, and drops to earth. The song ceases, but the sounds still vibrate on the ear, and can never be forgotten.

“ Qual lodaletta che 'n aere si spazia  
Primo cantando, e poi tace contenta  
Dell'ultima dolcezza che la sazia.” *Par.* xx. 73.

“ Cantando sì dolce,  
Che mai da me non si partì 'l diletto.” *Par.* xxiii. 128.



## NOTE.

It is observable that Dante terminates each of the three canticles of the *Commedia* with the same word, *stelle*.

“ E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.” *Inf.* xxxiv. ult.

“ Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.” *Purg.* xxxiii. ult.

“ L' amor che muove il sole e l'altre stelle.” *Par.* xxxiii. ult.

He meant to signify, perhaps, that the firmament was to him, as it had been to the Psalmist, and must be to every eye, the most striking and magnificent evidence of the power of the Almighty. *Cæli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum ejus annunciat firmamentum* (Ps. xviii.); and to teach us also that the wonders of the heavens should withdraw the mind from an excessive devotion towards any earthly object, however bright and lovely, and should turn it to the contemplation of the Creator.

“ Volgiti a miglior luce, e guarda il cielo,  
Che ognor ti mostra sue bellezze eterne,  
E a se ti chiama con pietoso zelo :  
E pur quelle lassù bellezze esterne  
Altro non sono che un oscuro velo  
Di quel bello immortal ch' entro si scerne.” *Redi.*

The last Canto of the ‘Paradiso’ is occupied in treating of those doctrines of the divine essence which are dependent on revelation, and are solely matters of faith. The last line of the work adverts to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; attributes of his infinity which natural religion teaches, and reason can demonstrate. These mysterious and demonstrable truths of Christianity are the grandest and most important subjects of the *Commedia*, and have ever been the favourite theme of the great lyrical poets of Italy, many of whose sonnets harmonize so beautifully with the language of Dante, that we gladly devote the few remaining pages to specimens of some of the most celebrated.



L' ATEO.

NUME non v' è, dicea fra se lo stolto,  
Nume non v' è che l' Universo regga :  
Squarci l' empio la benda ond' egli è avvolto,  
Agli occhi infidi, e se v' ha Nume ei vegga.  
Nume non v' è ? Verso del Ciel rivolto  
Chiaro il suo inganno in tante stelle ei legga.  
Speglisi, e impresso nel suo proprio volto  
Ad ogni sguardo il suo Fattor rivegga.  
Nume non v' é ? de' fiumi i puri argenti,  
L' aer che spiri, il suolo ove risiedi,  
Le piante, l' erbe, i fior, le arene, i venti,  
Tutti parlan di Dio : per tutto vedi  
Del grand' esser di lui segni eloquenti ;  
Credilo, stolto, a lor, se a Te nol credi.

COTTA.



cclxxxv

DIO UNO.

Quegli, o superbo, che dal Ciel ti piove  
Favor cotanti in questo basso suolo,  
Sommo possente Nume, è un Nume solo,  
Cui vicenda di tempo unqua non move.  
Il ferreo Marte, il fulminante Giove,  
E d' altri mille il numeroso stuolo,  
Favole son del cieco volgo, e solo  
Vago di spesse Deitadi, e nuove.  
V' ha un solo Dio la cui superna cura  
Il basso mondo regge, ed il sovrano,  
E colla destra gli Oceàn misura.  
China la fronte, e umil l' adora, o insano,  
Che unico, e solo il mostra a te Natura,  
E seco è Fede colla face in mano.

COTTA.

DIO UNO E TRINO.

Tu che mai fatto il tutto sempre fai,  
E ciò che festi già reggi e governi ;  
Tu sotto i di cui piè fermi ed eterni  
Soggiace il tempo, il fato, il sempre, il mai :  
Tu dai l' ombre alla notte, al giorno i rai ;  
Tu il mondo attempi, e il Paradiso eterni :  
Tu ne visto ne scerto, e vedi e scerni,  
E nè mai mosso, movi, e moverai.  
Tu tutti i luoghi ingombri, e non hai loco ;  
Tu premii i giusti, e tu castighi i rei ;  
Tu dai l' algore al gel, l' ardore al foco.  
Tu Te stesso in Te stesso, e vedi e bei :  
Tu sei ch' io non conosco eppure invoco :  
Uno sei, Trino sei, Tu sei chi sei.

ANTON MARIA SALVINI.

## DIO.

Sparger quest' ampie sfere al centro intorno  
 E di spirti sublimi ornar il cielo ;  
 Temprar degli elementi il vario zelo  
 E 'l mondo far con la lor guerra adorno ;  
 Dar la luna alla notte, il sole al giorno,  
 Stender nell' aria delle nubi il velo ;  
 Frenar i venti, e far ch'or caldo or gielo  
 Doni alla terra della copia il corno :  
 Dar corso a fiumi in questa e 'n quella parte ;  
 Ornar l' uom d' intelletto e di parole ;  
 Dar vita, senso, e moto agli animali ;  
 Delle tue man son opre altere e sole,  
 Signor, onde a noi ciechi egri mortali  
 Mostri il tuo sommo amor la forza e l' arte.

G. FIAMMA.

DIO PRINCIPIO MEZZO E FINE  
DI TUTTE LE COSE.

Teco è il Principio, e Tu il Principio sei  
 Primo ed Eterno onde ogni ben dipende ;  
 Tu il gran Padre de' Lumi onde discende  
 Di raggio in guisa ciò che formi e crei.  
 Tu sei l' ultima meta, e il cammin prende  
 Verso di Te, quanto di Te sol bei ;  
 E quasi fiamma alla sua sfera ascende  
 Da questi abissi tenebrosi e rei.  
 E poichè a Te, senza di Te non sale  
 Cosa creata, e il suo sentier non vede ;  
 Tu sei la via, Tu le dai moto ed ale,  
 O sommo ben, da Te ogni ben procede,  
 Qual dall' ampio Oceàn fiume reale  
 Vien dal mar, muove al mar, in mar sen riede.

COTTA.



## LA PROVIDENZA DI DIO.

Qual Madre i figli con pietoso affetto  
 Mira, e d' amor sì strugge a lor davante,  
 E un bacia in fronte, ed un si stringe al petto,  
 Uno tien sui ginocchi, un su le piante ;  
 E mentre agli atti, ai gemiti, all 'aspetto,  
 Lor voglie intende sì diverse e tante,  
 A questi un guardo, a quei dispensa un detto,  
 E se ride, o si adira è sempre amante ;  
 Tal per noi Provvidenza alta infinita  
 Veglia, e questi conforta, e quei provvede,  
 E tutti ascolta, e porge a tutti aita ;  
 E se nega talor grazia, o mercede,  
 O nega sol perchè a pregar ne invita,  
 O negar finge, e nel negar concede.

VINCENZO FILICAJA.

## IL RAVVEDIMENTO.

Dal Pellegrin, che torna al suo soggiorno,  
 E con lo stanco piè posa ogni cura,  
 Ridir si fanno i fidi Amici intorno  
 Dell' aspre vie la più lontana, e dura.  
 Dal mio Cor, che a se stesso or fa ritorno,  
 Così dimando anch' io la ria ventura,  
 In cui fallaci il raggiraro un giorno  
 Nella men saggia età Speme, e Paura.  
 In vece di risposta egli sospira,  
 E stassi ripensando al suo periglio,  
 Qual chi campò dall' onda, e all' onda mira :  
 Pur col pensier del sostenuto esiglio  
 Ristringo il freno all' Appetito, e all' Ira.  
 Che 'l prò de 'mali è migliorar consiglio.

CARLO MARIA MAGGI.

SONNET.

Scorn not the Sonnet ; Critic, you have frown'd,  
Mindless of its just honours ; with this key  
Shakspeare unlock'd his heart ; the melody  
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound ;  
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound ;  
With it Camoëns soothed an exile's grief ;  
The Sonnet glitter'd a gay myrtle leaf  
Amid the cypress with which Dante crown'd  
His visionary brow ; a glow-worm lamp,  
It cheer'd mild Spenser, call'd from Faery-land  
To struggle through dark ways ; and, when a damp  
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
The Thing became a trumpet ; whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few !

WORDSWORTH.





*M. L., del.*

*F. Gyde, sc.*

LA DONNA DEI POETI DEL MEDIO EVO.

**P O E M S**  
**OF**  
**THE VITA NUOVA.**

**B**



## SONETTO I.

A CIASCUN' alma presa e gentil core,  
Nel cui cospetto viene il dir presente,  
In ciò che mi riscrivan suo parvente,  
Salute in lor signor, cioè Amore.  
Già eran quasi ch'atterzate l'ore  
Del tempo ch'ogni stella è più lucente,  
Quando m'apparve Amor subitamente,  
Cui essenza membrar mi dà orrore.  
Allegro mi sembrava Amor, tenendo  
Mio core in mano, e nelle braccia avea  
Madonna, involta in un drappo dormendo.  
Poi la svegliava, e d'esto core ardendo  
Lei paventosa umilmente pascea :  
Appresso gir lo ne vedea piangendo.



## SONNET I.

To every captive soul and gentle heart,  
    Into whose sight the present song shall come,  
    Praying their thoughts on what it may portend,  
    Health in the name of Love, their sovereign lord.  
A third part of the hours had almost past  
    Which show in brightest lustre every star,  
    When suddenly before me Love appeared,  
    Whose essence to remember gives me horror.  
Joyful Love seem'd, holding within his hand  
    My heart, and in his arms enfolded lay  
    Madonna sleeping, in a mantle wrapt.  
He then awoke her, and this burning heart  
    Presented humbly, which in fear she ate.  
    That done, I saw him go his way in tears.

## SONETTO.

RISPOSTA DI GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

*VEDESTI, al mio parere, ogni valore  
E tutto gioco e quanto bene uom sente,  
Se fosti in pruova del signor valente  
Che signorreggia il mondo dell'onore ;  
Poi vive in parte dove noja muore,  
E tien ragion nella pietosa mente ;  
Sì va soave nei sonni alla gente  
Che i cor ne porta senza far dolore.  
Di voi lo cor se ne portò, veggendo  
Che vostra donna la morte chiedea ;  
Nudrilla d'esto cor, di ciò temendo.  
Quando t'apparve che sen già dogliendo,  
Fu dolce sogno ch'allor si compiea,  
Che 'l suo contraro lo venia vincendo.*

## SONNET.

REPLY OF GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

*THOU hast beheld all power, meseems, and worth,  
All joy and every good that man can know,  
If thou hast proved the virtue of that lord  
Who sovereign o'er the world of honour rules ;  
For he delights to live where grief expires,  
And sits as judge in minds where pity dwells,  
So softly o'er the fancy steals in sleep,  
That hearts he bears away without a pang.  
Your heart he bore away, for he perceived  
That to your lady Death was laying claim ;  
And fearing this, sustained her with that heart.  
When he appeared to go his way in grief,  
Sweet was the dream, for then it fully told  
That sorrow's opposite was conquering.*

## BALLATA I.

O voi che per la via d'Amor passate,  
Attendete e guardate,  
S'egli è dolore alcun, quanto il mio, grave ;  
E prego sol ch'a udir mi sofferiate ;  
E poi immaginate  
S'io son d'ogni tormento ostello e chiave.  
Amor, non già per mia poca bontate,  
Ma per sua nobiltate,  
Mi pose in vita sì dolce e soave,  
Ch'io mi sentia dir dietro spese fiate :  
Deh per qual dignitate  
Così leggiadro questi lo cor ave !  
Or ho perduta tutta mia baldanza  
Che si movea d'amoroso tesoro,  
Ond'io pover dimoro  
In guisa che di dir mi vien dottanza.  
Sì che, volendo far come coloro  
Che per vergogna celan lor mancanza,  
Di fuor mostro allegrezza,  
E dentro da lo cor mi struggo e ploro.



## BALLATA I.

O YE who wander in the path of Love,  
Attend to me and see,  
If there be any sorrow great as mine ;  
I pray you but to hear me patiently,  
And then think whether I  
Of every torment am the abode and key.  
Love, not through merit of my slender worth,  
But through his nobleness,  
Had placed me in a life so calm and sweet,  
That oft I heard behind me voices say,  
Tell me the mighty worth  
Entitles this man to a heart so light.  
Now have I wholly lost the spirit bold  
That from the fountain of Love's treasure flow'd,  
Whence I am left so poor,  
I tremble to give utterance to thought :  
So that, endeavouring to do like those  
Who strive to hide their penury through shame,  
I wear a face of joy,  
And inwardly at heart I pine and mourn.

## SONETTO II.

PIANGETE amanti, poichè piange Amore,  
Udendo qual cagion lui fa plorare :  
Amor sente a pietà donne chiamare,  
Mostrando amaro duol per gli occhi fuore ;  
Perchè villana morte in gentil core  
Ha messo il suo crudele adoperare,  
Guastando ciò che al mondo è da laudare  
In gentil donna, fuori dell'onore.  
Udite quant' Amor le fece orranza ;  
Ch'io 'l vidi lamentare in forma vera  
Sovra la morta immagine avvenente :  
E riguardava ver lo ciel sovente,  
Ove l'alma gentil già locata era,  
Che donna fu di sì gaja sembianza.



## SONNET II.

Ye lovers weep, for Love himself doth weep,  
When you shall hear the cause whence flow his tears;  
Love feels the piteous claim of ladies' moan,  
Whose eyes declare the bitterness of grief;  
For the rude hand of Death has done a deed  
Of cruelty upon a gentle heart;  
Destroying all that merits the world's praise  
In gentle lady, save her honoured fame.  
Hear now what honour she received from Love;  
I saw him in his very person mourn  
O'er the dead image of her loveliness;  
And oft he cast a wistful look to heaven,  
Where then the gentle spirit was at rest,  
That lady was of countenance so gay.



## BALLATA II.

MORTE villana, di pietà nemica,  
Di dolor madre antica,  
Giudicio incontrastabile gravoso,  
Poi ch'hai data materia al cor doglioso,  
Ond'io vado pensoso,  
Di te biasmar la lingua s'affatica.  
E se di grazia ti vuoi far mendica,  
Convenesi ch'io dica  
Lo tuo fallir d'ogni torto tortoso ;  
Non però ch'alla gente sia nascoso,  
Ma per farne cruccioso  
Chi d'amor per innanzi si nutrica.  
Dal secolo hai partita cortesia,  
E ciò che 'n donna è da pregiar, virtude ;  
In gaja gioventude  
Distrutta hai l'amorosa leggiadria.  
Più non vuo' discovrir qual donna sia,  
Che per le proprietà sue conosciute :  
Chi non merta salute  
Non speri mai d'aver sua compagnia.

## BALLATA II.

DISCOURTEOUS Death ! compassion's enemy,  
Of grief the parent old,  
O judgement, irresistible, severe,  
Since thou hast given a theme to this sad heart,  
On which my thoughts still dwell,  
The tongue is wearied in upbraiding thee.  
And if to prayer thou wilt refuse all grace,  
'Tis just that I denounce  
Thy cruelty, of wrongful deeds most wrong ;  
Not that it can be hidden from the world,  
But I would stir the wrath  
Of all whose nourishment henceforth is love.  
From this world thou hast driven fair courtesy,  
And virtue most in lady to be prized ;  
In gaiety of youth  
Thou hast destroy'd the gracefulness of love.  
More of this lady I will not disclose  
Than by her attributes may here be known :  
He who deserves not heaven,  
May never hope to have her company.

## SONETTO III.

CAVALCANDO l'altr' ier per un camino,  
Pensoso dell'andar che mi sgradia,  
Trovai Amore in mezzo de la via  
In abito leggier di pellegrino.  
Nella sembianza mi pareva meschino,  
Come avesse perduta signoria,  
E sospirando pensoso venìa,  
Per non veder la gente, a capo chino.  
Quando mi vide, mi chiamò per nome,  
E disse: Io vegno di lontana parte,  
Ov'era lo tuo cor per mio volere,  
E recolo a servir novo piacere.  
Allora presi di lui sì gran parte,  
Ch'egli disparve, e non m'accorsi come.

## SONNET III.

Riding the other day along a road,  
And on my irksome journey pondering,  
I chanced to meet with Love upon the way,  
Clad in a pilgrim's light and humble garb.  
In look he seemed dejected and forlorn,  
As if his mighty sovereignty were lost ;  
And sighing, was advancing pensively,  
With head declined, to avoid the sight of man.  
When seen of him, he called to me by name,  
And said, I come from a far distant land,  
Where, by my will, thy heart had been disposed,  
And bring it here for service sweet and new.  
Then was I so enamour'd of his will,  
That he had vanished, and I knew not how.

## BALLATA III.

BALLATA, io vuo' che tu ritrovi Amore,  
E con lui vadi a Madonna davanti,  
Sì che la scusa mia, la qual tu canti,  
Ragioni poi con lei lo mio signore.  
Tu vai, ballata, sì cortesemente,  
Che senza compagnia  
Dovresti avere in tutte parti ardire ;  
Ma se tu vuoi andar sicuramente,  
Ritrova l' Amor pria,  
Che forse non è buon senza lui gire ;  
Perocchè quella che ti deve udire,  
Se, com'io credo, è in ver di me adirata,  
E tu di lui non fossi accompagnata,  
Leggeramente ti faria disnore.  
Con dolce suono, quando se' con lui  
Comincia este parole,  
Appresso che tu avrai chiesta pietate :  
Madonna, quegli che mi manda a vui,  
Quando vi piaccia, vuole  
Sed egli ha scusa, che la m'intendiate.



## BALLATA III.

My song, it is my wish thou find out Love,  
And to Madonna's presence go with him,  
So that my sovereign in discourse with her  
May offer my excuse, which thou shalt sing.  
Thy bearing is so courteous, my song,  
That unaccompanied  
Thy spirit might be bold in every place ;  
But wouldst thou go in full security,  
First thou must find out Love,  
For without him to go might not be well ;  
Since she who ought to give thee audience,  
If, as it seems, I have much angered her,  
And thou wert not accompanied by him,  
Might hastily perhaps dishonour thee.  
In sound melodious, when thou art with him,  
Begin the following strain,  
After a prayer to be with pity heard :  
Madonna, he whose messenger I am,  
When you shall please, entreats  
That you will hear if he may be excused.

Amore è qui che per vostra beltate  
Lo face, come vuol, vista cangiare :  
Dunque, perchè gli fece altra guardare,  
Pensatel voi, dacchè non mutò 'l core.

Dille : Madonna, lo suo core è stato  
Con sì fermata fede,  
Che 'n voi servir l' ha 'n pronto ogni pensiero :  
Tosto fu vostro, e mai non s' è smagato.  
Se ella non ti crede,  
Dì ch' en domandi Amor, che ne sa 'l vero.  
Ed alla fine falle umil preghiero,  
Lo perdonare se le fosse a noja,  
Che mi comandi per messo ch' io muoja,  
E vedrassi ubbidire al servitore.  
E di' a colui ch' è d' ogni pietà chiave,  
Avanti che sdonnei,  
Che le saprà contar mia ragion buona :  
Per grazia della mia nota soave  
Rimanti qui con lei,  
E del tuo servo ciò che vuol ragiona ;  
E s' ella per tuo prego gli perdona,  
Fa che gli annunzj in bel sembiante pace.  
Gentil ballata mia, quando ti piace,  
Movi in tal punto che tu n' aggi onore.

Love standeth here, who by your beauty's power  
Makes him to change his countenance at will ;  
Reflect then, why he made him seem to court  
Another, for his heart hath never changed.  
And say, Madonna, yours his heart hath been  
With such confirmed faith,  
That every thought is bent on serving you ;  
Yours was he early, nor hath ever swerved.  
If she believe thee not,  
Tell her to question Love, who knows the truth.  
Lastly, prefer to her a humble prayer,  
To pardon, if offence he may have given :  
Let her by message order me to die,  
And she shall see her servant will obey.  
And say to him who is compassion's key,  
Before thou leave the lady,  
For he shall prove to her my loyalty :  
In virtue of my sweet and suppliant lay,  
Remain thou here with her,  
And for thy servant, plead as he desires :  
And if she grant him pardon through thy prayer,  
Make her announce his peace in beauty's smile.  
My gentle song, go when it pleaseth thee,  
And in such time that it shall bring thee honour.



## SONETTO IV.

TUTTI li miei pensier parlan d'Amore,  
Ed hanno in lor sì gran varietate,  
Ch'altro mi fa voler sua potestate,  
Altro folle ragiona il suo valore :  
Altro sperando m'apporta dolzore,  
Altro pianger mi fa spesse fiate :  
E sol s'accordan in chieder pietate,  
Tremando di paura ch'è nel core :  
Ond'io non so da qual materia prenda,  
E vorrei dire, e non so ch'io mi dica :  
Così mi trovo in amorosa erranza.  
E se con tutti vo' fare accordanza  
Convienemi chiamar la mia nemica  
Madonna la Pietà che mi difenda.



## SONNET IV.

My thoughts are all discoursing upon Love,  
And have in them so great variety,  
That one persuades me to desire his sway,  
Another says his power is vanity :  
One sweetly soothes and cheers me while I hope,  
Another oftentimes makes my tears to flow,  
And they alone accord in pity's claim,  
Trembling with fear which is within the heart.  
Hence know I not what argument to take,  
And fain would speak, and know not what to say ;  
Thus do I wander in Love's labyrinth.  
And if with all I would accordance make,  
I needs must call upon my enemy,  
Madonna Pity, to be my defence.

## SONETTO V.

Con l'altre donne mia vista gabbate,  
E non pensate, donna, onde si mova  
Ch'io vi rassembri sì figura nova,  
Quando riguardo la vostra beltate.  
Se lo saveste, non porrìa Pietate  
Tener più contra me l'usata prova ;  
Ch'Amor quando sì presso a voi mi trova  
Prende baldanza, e tanta sicurtate,  
Che fiere tra' miei spiriti paurosi,  
E quali ancide, e quai pinge di fuori,  
Sì che solo rimane a veder vui.  
Ond'io mi cangio in figura d'altrui ;  
Ma non sì ch'io non senta ben allora  
Li guai degli scacciati tormentosi.




## SONNET V.

With other ladies you deride my looks,  
And you reflect not, lady, whence it comes  
That I appear to you a sight so strange  
And alter'd when your beauty I regard.  
If you but knew it, Pity would relent,  
Nor with the wonted trial vex me more ;  
For when Love finds me near you, he assumes  
Such boldness, and so great security,  
That my poor timid spirits he assails,  
And some he deadly wounds, some drives away,  
Till he alone remains to gaze on you.  
Hence to another's semblance I am changed ;  
But not so changed that still I do not feel  
The anguish of the exiled sufferers.

## SONETTO VI.

Ciò che m' incontra nella mente more  
Quando vengo a veder voi, bella gioja ;  
E quando io vi son presso sento Amore  
Che dice : fuggi, se 'l perir t' è noja.  
Lo viso mostra lo color del core,  
Che tramortendo ovunque può s' appoja,  
E per l' ebbrietà del gran tremore,  
Le pietre par che gridin : moja, moja.  
Peccato face chi allora mi vede  
Se l' alma sbigottita non conforta,  
Sol dimostrando che di me li doia,  
Per la pietà che 'l vostro gabbo avvede,  
La qual si cria nella vista morta  
Degli occhi ch' hanno di lor morte voia.



## SONNET VI.

ALL thoughts that meet within my mind expire,  
Fair jewel, when I come to gaze on you ;  
And when I am near you, I hear Love exclaim,  
O flee, if thy destruction thou wouldst shun.  
The countenance the heart's complexion wears,  
Which fainting seeks support where'er it can ;  
And through the intoxication of great fear,  
The very stones, methinks, cry out, Die, die !  
He sins who can behold me then unmoved,  
Nor comfort gives to the affrighted soul,  
At least in showing that he pities me  
For the distress occasioned by your scorn,  
Which is apparent in the deadly hue  
Of these sad eyes that fain would close in death.

## SONETTO VII.


Spesse fiate venemi alla mente  
L'oscura qualità ch' Amor mi dona ;  
E vienmene pietà sì, che sovente  
Io dico : lasso, avvien egli a persona !  
Ch' Amor m' assale subitanamente  
Sì che la vita quasi m' abbandona ;  
Campi uno spirto vivo solamente,  
E quel riman, perchè di voi ragiona.  
Poscia mi sforzo che mi voglio aiutare ;  
E così smorto e d'ogni valor voto  
Vegno a vedervi, credendo guarire :  
E s' io levo gli occhi per guardare,  
Nel cor mi si comincia un terremoto  
Che fa da' polsi l'anima partire.



## SONNET VII.

MANY the times that to my memory comes  
The cheerless state imposed on me by Love ;  
And o'er me comes such sadness then, that oft  
I say, alas, was ever fate like mine !  
For Love assaulteth me so suddenly  
That life itself almost abandons me :  
One spirit alone escapes alive, and that  
Is left, fair lady, for it speaks of you.  
At length I make an effort for relief,  
And so, all pale and destitute of power,  
I come to gaze on you, in hope of cure :  
And if I raise the eyes that I may look,  
A trembling at my heart begins, so dread,  
It makes the soul take flight from every vein.

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## CANZONE I.


DONNE che avete intelletto d'amore,  
Io vuo' con voi della mia donna dire ;  
Non perchè io creda sua laude finire,  
Ma ragionar per isfogar la mente.  
Io dico che pensando al suo valore,  
Amor sì dolce mi si fa sentire,  
Che s' io allora non perdessi ardire,  
Farei parlando innamorar la gente.  
Ed io non vuo' parlar sì altamente  
Ch' io divenissi per temenza vile ;  
Ma tratterò del suo stato gentile,  
A rispetto di lei, leggermente,  
Donne e donzelle amorose, con vui,  
Chè non è cosa da parlare altrui.

Angelo chiama in divino intelletto  
E dice : Sire, nel mondo si vede  
Meraviglia nell'atto, che procede  
D'un'anima che insin quassù risplende.  
Lo ciel che non aveva altro difetto  
Che d'aver lei, al suo signor la chiede,



## CANZONE I.

LADIES who have intelligence of love,  
With you of my loved lady I would speak ;  
Not vainly thinking to exhaust her praise,  
But in discoursing to relieve my mind.  
I say that, in reflecting on her worth,  
Love's inspiration is so sweetly felt,  
That, if my courage did not fail me then,  
The world should be enamour'd by my words.  
And from a flight so lofty I abstain,  
Lest I become contemptible through fear ;  
But of her gentle nature I will treat,  
In lowly strain compared with her desert,  
Ladies and damsels rich in love, with you ;  
For 'tis a theme unmeet for other ear.  
An angel to the intelligence divine  
Appeals, and says : Sire, in the world is seen  
A miracle in action, which proceeds  
From a fair soul whose splendour mounts thus high.  
Heaven, that no want had ever known but her,  
Entreats to have her presence of its lord,



E ciascun santo ne grida mercede.  
Solo pietà nostra parte difende.  
Che parla Dio? che di Madonna intende?  
Diletti miei, or sofferite in pace  
Che vostra speme sia quanto mi piace  
Là ov' è alcun che perder lei s'attende,  
E che dirà nell' inferno a' mal nati:  
Io vidi la speranza de' beati.  
Madonna è desiata in l' alto cielo:  
Or vuo' di sua virtù farvi sapere.  
Dico: qual vuol gentil donna parere  
Vada con lei; chè quando va per via  
Gitta ne' cuor villani Amore un gelo,  
Per che ogni lor pensiero agghiaccia e pere:  
E qual soffrisse di starla a vedere  
Diverrà nobil cosa, o si morrà.  
E quando trova alcun che degno sia  
Di veder lei, quei prova sua virtute;  
Chè gli avvien ciò che gli dona salute,  
E sì l'umilia ch'ogni offesa obblia.  
Ancor le ha Dio per maggior grazia dato,  
Che non può mal finir chi le ha parlato.  
Dice di lei Amor: cosa mortale  
Com' esser può sì adorna e sì pura?  
Poi la riguarda, e fra se stesso giura

And every saint aloud implores the grace.  
Pity alone opposes our request.  
What is Madonna's doom? What God's decree?  
My well-beloved, suffer now in peace  
That, while my pleasure is, your hope should stay  
Where there is one who must abide her loss,  
And who shall say to the condemn'd in hell,  
The hope of blessed spirits I have seen.  
Madonna is in highest heaven desired:  
Now will I tell you of her excellence.  
I say then, that the lady who would show  
True gentleness should walk with her; for when  
She moves, Love casts o'er vulgar hearts a chill,  
Which freezes and destroys their every thought:  
And he whom Love permits to see her long,  
A thing ennobled should become, or die.  
And when he finds one who may worthy be  
To look on her, her influence is proved;  
For he receives the gift, conferring health,  
And the meek spirit which forgets all wrongs.  
Still hath God given her this higher grace,  
That who with her converses heaven secures.  
Love says of her, can there be mortal thing  
At once adorn'd so richly and so pure?  
Then looks on her, and silently affirms

Che Dio ne intende di far cosa nova.  
Color di perla quasi informa, quale  
Convien a donna aver non fuor misura.  
Ella è quanto di ben può far natura ;  
Per esempio di lei beltà si prova.  
Degli occhi suoi, comech' ella li mova,  
Escono spirti d'amore infiammati,  
Che fieron gli occhi a quel ch' allor la guati,  
E passan sì ch' il cor ciascun ritrova.  
Voi le vedete Amor pinto nel viso,  
Ove non puote alcun mirarla fiso.  
Canzone, io so che tu girai parlando  
A donne assai quand' io t' avrò avanzata :  
Or t' ammonisco, perch' io t' ho allevata  
Per figliuola d' Amor giovane e piana,  
Che là ove giungi tu dichì pregando :  
Insegnatemi gir, ch' io son mandata  
A quella di cui lode io sono ornata.  
E se non vuoi andar siccome vana,  
Non restar dove sia gente villana :  
Ingegnati, se puoi, d' esser palese  
Solo con donna o con uomo cortese,  
Che ti merranno per la via tostana.  
Tu troverai Amor con esso lei :  
Racomandami a lor, come tu dei.



That Heaven designs in her a creature new.  
A hue of pearl invests her countenance,  
Suiting a lady, pale but not extreme.  
All choicest gifts in nature's power are hers :  
In her example beauty finds its test ;  
Where'er she turns her eyes, from them go forth  
Spirits of love, which, full of gentle flame,  
Strike on the eyes of those beholding her,  
And thus each finds a passage to the heart.  
You see Love pictured in her countenance,  
Where none has power to look with fix'd regard.  
My song, I know that thou wilt converse hold  
With many a lady when sent forth by me :  
Now I admonish, having brought thee up  
For one, young, modest, and the child of Love,  
That where thou com'st thou shalt entreating say,  
Teach me my course, for I am sent to her,  
Whose praise doth constitute my ornament.  
And if thou wouldst not have thy journey vain,  
Remain not where ungentle minds are found :  
Endeavour, if thou canst, to be reveal'd  
Only to lady or to courteous man,  
Who soon will speed thee to thy journey's end.  
Love thou wilt find in company with her ;  
Commend me to them, as becometh thee.

## SONETTO VIII.

AMORE e 'l cor gentil sono una cosa,  
Sì com' il Saggio in suo dittato pone ;  
E così senza l' un l' altro essere osa,  
Com' alma razional senza ragione.

Fagli natura quando è amorosa  
Amor per sire, e 'l cor per sua magione,  
Dentro alla quale dormendo si posa  
Tal volta poco, e tal lunga stagione.

Beltate appare in saggia donna pui  
Che piace agli occhi sì che dentr' al core  
Nasce un desio della cosa piacente ;  
E tanto dura talora in costui,  
Che fa svegliar lo spirito d' Amore ;  
E simil face in donna uomo valente.



## SONNET VIII.

Love and the gentle heart are but one thing,  
As says the wise man in his apophthegm ;  
And one can by itself no more exist  
Than reason can without the reasoning soul.  
Nature when full of love creates the two ;  
Love for a king, the heart for his abode,  
Within which palace sleeping, his repose  
At times is brief, at others lasteth long.  
Beauty appears in virtuous lady then,  
Which so delights the eye, that in the heart  
Desire is born to win the pleasing thing ;  
And there maintains itself at times so long,  
That it compels the spirit of Love to wake :  
And manly worth in lady doth the same.



## SONETTO IX.

NEGLI occhi porta la mia donna Amore,  
Per che si fa gentil ciò ch'ella mira :  
Ov' ella passa ogni uom ver lei si gira,  
E cui saluta fa tremar lo core ;  
Sì che bassando il viso tutto smore,  
E d'ogni suo difetto allor sospira :  
Fugge davanti a lei superbia ed ira.  
Aitatemi voi, donne, a farle onore.  
Ogni dolcezza, ogni pensiero umile  
Nasce nel core a chi parlar la sente ;  
Ond' è beato chi prima la vide.  
Quel ch'ella par quando un poco sorride  
Non si può dicer, nè tenere a mente,  
Si è nuovo miracolo e gentile.



## SONNET IX.

WITHIN her eyes my lady carries Love,  
Whence is ennobled all that she regards :  
Where'er she moves, towards her do all men turn,  
And the heart throbs of him whom she salutes ;  
So that with countenance cast down and pale  
He then, remembering all his failings, sighs.  
Anger and pride before her presence fly :  
O ladies, lend me aid to do her honour.  
All sweetness, every humble thought is born  
Within the heart of him who hears her speak :  
Then blest is he who first hath look'd on her.  
What she appears when she a little smiles,  
Tongue cannot tell nor memory retain,  
So new and lovely is the miracle.

## SONETTO X.

Voi che portate la sembianza umile,  
Con gli occhi bassi mostrando dolore,  
Onde venite, che il vostro colore  
Par divenuto di pietra simile ?  
Vedeste voi nostra donna gentile  
Bagnata il viso di pietà d'amore ?  
Ditelmi, donne, chè 'l mi dice 'l core,  
Per ch'io vi veggio andar senz'atto vile.  
E se venite da tanta pietate,  
Piacciavi di restar qui meco alquanto,  
E quel che sia di lei nol mi celate :  
Ch'io veggio gli occhi vostri ch'hanno pianto,  
E veggiovì tornar sì sfigurate,  
Ch' il cor mi trema di vederne tanto.



## SONNET X.

YE who a countenance so lowly wear,  
Showing with downcast eyes an inward grief,  
Whence do ye come, that your complexion's hue  
Seems changed into a likeness of the tomb?  
Our gentle lady have you left, and seen  
Her face bedew'd with tears of sorrowing love?  
O tell me, ladies, for so says my heart,  
When your ennobled bearing I regard.  
And if from such affliction ye do come,  
O stay in kindness here with me awhile,  
And whatsoe'er her state conceal it not.  
For by your eyes I see that they have wept,  
And see you come with features so disturb'd,  
That my heart trembles at such signs of woe.

## SONETTO XI.

Sz' tu colui ch'hai trattato sovente  
Di nostra donna sol parlando a nui ?  
Tu rassomigli alla voce ben lui,  
Ma la figura ci par d'altra gente.  
E perchè piangi tu sì coralmente  
Che fai di te pietà venire altrui ?  
Vedestù pianger lei chè tu non pui  
Punto celar la dolorosa mente ?  
Or lascia pianger noi, e triste andare ;  
E' fa peccato chi mai ne conforta,  
Chè nel suo pianto l'udimmo parlare.  
Ell' ha nel viso la pietà sì scorta,  
Che qual l'avesse voluto mirare  
Sarebbe innanzi lei piangendo morta.



## SONNET XI.

ART thou the man who of our lady hast  
So often sung, addressing us alone ?  
In voice thou dost indeed resemble him,  
But in thy looks thou seem'st of other race.  
And wherefore weepest thou so feelingly,  
That others thou dost make to pity thee ?  
Hast thou too seen her weep, and hast not power  
The anguish of thy bosom to conceal ?  
Leave us to weep, and go our mournful way ;  
He sins who doth attempt to comfort us,  
For we have heard her speak amidst her tears.  
Such woe is in her countenance express'd,  
That who should have the heart to look on it,  
Would in her presence through his sorrow die.

## CANZONE II.

DONNA pietosa e di novella etate,  
Adorna assai di gentilezze umane,  
Ch' era là ov' io chiamava spesso morte,  
Veggendo gli occhi miei pien di pietate,  
Ed ascoltando le parole vane,  
Si mosse con paura a pianger forte ;  
Ed altre donne che si furo accorte  
Di me, per quella che meco piangia,  
Fecer lei partir via,  
Ed appressarsi per farsi sentire.  
Qual dicea : non dormire ;  
E qual dicea : perchè s' ti sconsorte ?  
Allor lasciai la nuova fantasia,  
Chiamando il nome della donna mia.  
Era la voce mia sì dolorosa,  
E rotta sì dall'angoscia e dal pianto,  
Ch' io solo intesi il nome nel mio core ;  
E con tutta la vista vergognosa  
Ch'era nel viso mio giunta cotanto,  
Mi fece verso lor volgere Amore ;




## CANZONE II.

A LADY piteous and of tender age,  
Richly adorn'd with human gentleness,  
Stood where I oft was calling upon death ;  
And seeing that my eyes were full of grief,  
And listening to the folly of my words,  
Was moved by fear to weep with bitterness.  
And other ladies, who were kindly drawn  
To notice me, through her who wept with me,  
Removed her from my side,  
And then approach'd, to rouse me by their voice.  
And one said, sleep no more !  
Another said, why thus discomfort thee ?  
Then fled the strange distressing fantasy,  
As I was calling on my lady's name.  
So indistinct and mournful was my voice,  
And broken so by anguish and by tears,  
That in my heart I only heard the name :  
And with a countenance o'erspread with shame,  
So strongly it had mounted to my face,  
Love made me turn to them distractedly ;



Ed era tale a veder mio colore  
Che facea ragionar di morte altrui.  
Deh ! consoliam costui :  
Diceva l' una all' altra umilmente.  
E dicevan sovente :  
Che vedestù che tu non hai valore ?  
E quando un poco confortato fui,  
Io dissi : donne, dicerollo a vui.  
Mentre pensava la mia frale vita,  
E vedea 'l suo durar com' è leggero,  
Piansemi Amor nel cor ove dimora ;  
Perchè l' anima mia fu sì smarrita  
Che sospirando dicea nel pensiero :  
Ben converrà che la mia donna mora.  
Io presi tanto smarrimento allora,  
Che chiusi gli occhi vilmente gravati ;  
Ed eran sì smagati  
Li spirti miei, che ciascun giva errando ;  
E poi imaginando,  
Di conoscenza e di verità fuora,  
Visi di donne mi parver crucciati,  
Che mi dicean : morra' tu ; pur, morrati.  
Poi vidi cose dubitose molte  
Nel vano imaginar ov' io entrai ;



And such was my complexion to the sight,  
That it led others to discourse of death.  
Oh let us comfort him,  
Said each one to the other tenderly.  
And oft they said to me,  
What hast thou seen, that has unmann'd thee thus ?  
And when I had regain'd some strength, I said,  
Ladies, to you I will relate the whole.  
Whilst I lay pondering on my ebbing life,  
And saw how brief its tenure and how frail,  
Love wept within my heart, where he abides,  
For my unhappy soul was wandering so,  
That sighing heavily, it said, in thought,  
My lady too most certainly shall die.  
Such consternation then my reason seized,  
That my eyes closed through fear and heaviness ;  
And scatter'd far and wide  
My spirits fled, and each in error stray'd.  
Imagination then,  
Bereft of understanding and of truth,  
Show'd me the forms of ladies in distress,  
Who said to me, thou die'st, ay, thou shalt die.  
Many the doubtful things which next I saw,  
While wandering in imagination's maze ;

Ed esser mi pareva non so in che loco,  
E veder donne andar per via disciolte,  
Qual lagrimando, e qual traendo guai,  
Che di tristizia saettavan foco.  
Poi mi parve vedere a poco a poco  
Turbar lo sole, ed apparir la stella,  
E pianger egli, ed ella ;  
Cader augelli volando per l' are,  
E la terra tremare ;  
Ed uom m'apparve scolorito e fioco,  
Dicendomi: che fai ? non sai novella ?  
Morta è la donna tua ch' era sì bella.  
Levava gli occhi miei bagnati in pianti,  
E vedea, che parean pioggia di manna,  
Gli angeli che tornavan suso in cielo,  
Ed una nuvoletta avean davanti,  
Dopo la qual gridavan tutti : Osanna.  
E s'altro avesser detto a voi dire 'lo.  
Allor diceva Amor : più non ti celo ;  
Vieni a veder nostra donna che giace.  
Lo imaginar fallace  
Mi condusse a veder mia donna morta :  
E quando io l' avea scorta,  
Vedea che donne la covrian d'un velo ;



I seem'd to be I know not in what place,  
And to see ladies pass with hair all loose,  
Some weeping, and some uttering loud laments,  
Which darted burning grief into the soul.  
And then methought I saw a thickening veil  
Obscure the sun, and night's fair star appear,  
And sun and star both weep ;  
Birds flying through the dusky air drop down,  
And earth itself to shake ;  
And then appear'd a man, feeble and pale,  
Saying, what dost thou here? hast thou not heard ?  
Dead is thy lady, she who was so fair.  
I raised mine eyes, oppress'd and bathed in tears,  
And saw what like a shower of manna seem'd,  
The angels re-ascending up to heaven ;  
And spread before them was a little cloud,  
Behind which they were chanting loud, Hosanna.  
And if they more had added, you should hear.  
Then Love thus spoke : concealment here shall end ;  
Come now and see our lady on her bier.  
Deceitful fancy then  
Conducted me to see my lady dead :  
And while I gazed, I saw  
That ladies with a veil were covering her ;

Ed avea seco umiltà sì verace  
Che pareva che dicesse : io sono in pace.  
Io divenia nello dolor sì umile  
Veggendo in lei tanta umiltà formata,  
Ch'io dicea : Morte, assai dolce ti tegno ;  
Tu dei omai esser cosa gentile,  
Poichè tu se' nella mia donna stata,  
E dei aver pietate, e non disdegno :  
Vedi che sì desideroso vegno  
D'esser de' tuoi ch'io ti somiglio in fede :  
Vieni, ch' il cor ti chiede.  
Poi mi partii, consumato ogni duolo :  
E quando io era solo  
Dicea, guardando verso l' alto regno :  
Beato, anima bella, chi ti vede !  
Voi mi chiamaste allor, vostra mercede.



And in her face humility so true  
There was, it seem'd to say, I am in peace.  
So humble in my sorrow I became,  
Seeing such humbleness in her express'd,  
That I exclaim'd, O Death, I hold thee sweet ;  
Thou must be deem'd henceforth a gentle thing,  
Since thou hast been united to my lady,  
And pity thou shouldst have, and not disdain :  
Behold me so desirous to be one  
Of thine, that I resemble thee in faith :  
Come, for the heart entreats thee.  
Then, all sad rites being o'er, I went my way ;  
And when I was alone,  
I said, with eyes upraised to realms above ;  
Blessed is he who sees thee, beauteous soul !  
'Twas then you call'd to me, thanks to your love.

## SONETTO XII.

Io mi sentii svegliar dentro a lo core  
Un spirito amoroso che dormia,  
E poi vidi venir di lungi Amore,  
Allegro sì che appena il conosca,  
Dicendo : or pensa pur di farmi onore ;  
E ciascuna parola sua ridia :  
E, poco stando, meco il mio signore,  
Guardando in quella parte ond' ei venia,  
Io vidi monna Vanna e monna Bice  
Venire in verso il loco dov' io era,  
L' una appresso dell' altra meraviglia.  
● E sì, come la mente mi ridice,  
Amor mi disse : questa è Primavera,  
E quella ha nome Amor, sì mi somiglia.



## SONNET XII.

I **FELT** awaken in my inmost heart  
A loving spirit that was sleeping there,  
And then saw Love, approaching from afar,  
His air so joyous that I scarcely knew him,  
Saying, now think for once to do me honour ;  
And every word of his spoke laughingly ;  
And soon, while yet my sovereign staid with me,  
In looking toward the quarter whence he came,  
I saw Giovanna and fair Beatrice,  
Coming, not far apart, to where I was,  
The one fair miracle behind the other.  
And thus, as memory recalls the words,  
Love said to me, this lady's name is Spring,  
And that—is Love, she so resembles me.



## SONETTO XIII.

**T**ANTO gentile, e tanto onesta pare  
La donna mia quand' ella altrui saluta,  
Che ogni lingua divien tremando muta,  
E gli occhi non l' ardiscon di guardare.  
**E**lla sen va sentendosi lodare  
Benignamente d'umiltà vestuta ;  
E par che sia una cosa venuta  
Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.  
**M**ostrasi sì piacente a chi la mira,  
Che dà per gli occhi una dolcezza al core  
Che intender non la può chi non la prova.  
**E** par che dalla sua labbia si mova  
Un spirito soave pien d'amore  
Che va dicendo all'anima : sospira.



## SONNET XIII.

So noble and so modest doth appear  
My lady unto all whom she salutes,  
That every tongue becomes with trembling mute,  
And none dare raise the eyes to look on her.  
Robed in humility she hears her praise,  
And passes on with calm benignity ;  
Appearing not a thing of earth, but come  
From heaven, to show mankind a miracle.  
So pleasing doth she show herself, that he  
Who gazes feels a sweetness reach the heart,  
That must be proved or cannot be conceived.  
And from her countenance there seems to flow  
A spirit full of mildness and of love,  
Which says for ever to the soul, O sigh.

## SONETTO XIV.

Vede perfettamente ogni salute  
Chi la mia donna tra le donne vede ;  
Quelle che vanno con lei son tenute  
Di bella grazia a Dio render mercede.  
E sua beltade è di tanta virtute  
Che nulla invidia all' altre ne procede,  
Anzi le face andar seco vestute  
Di gentilezza, d' amore e di fede.  
La vista sua fa ogni cosa umile,  
E non fa sola sè parer piacente,  
Ma ciascuna per lei riceve onore.  
Ed è negli atti suoi tanto gentile  
Che nessun la si può recare a mente  
Che non sospiri in dolcezza d' Amore.



## SONNET XIV.

HE the perfection sees of every grace,  
Who doth my lady among ladies see ;  
They who partake her company are bound  
To render thanks to heaven for boon so fair.  
Her beauty too has virtue so benign,  
That it excites no envy in another,  
But a resolve to walk like her, array'd  
In gentleness, fidelity, and love.  
Her look on all things sheds humility,  
And makes not her alone delight the eye,  
But every thing through her receiveth honour.  
And she so perfect is in all her acts,  
That no one can recall her to the mind  
Who doth not sigh amid the sweets of Love.

## SONETTO XV.

Sì lungamente m' ha tenuto Amore,  
E costumato alla sua signoria,  
Che sì com' egli m' era forte in pria,  
Così mi sta soave ora nel core.  
Però quando mi toglie sì 'l valore,  
Che gli spiriti par che fuggan via,  
Allor sente la frale anima mia  
Tanta dolcezza che 'l viso ne smore.  
Poi prende Amore in me tanta virtute  
Che fa li miei sospiri gir parlando ;  
Ed escon fuor chiamando  
La donna mia per darmi più salute.  
Questo m' avviene ovunque ella mi vede  
E sì è cosa umil, che nol si crede.



## SONNET XV.

So long has Love retain'd me in his power,  
And so accustom'd to his sovereignty,  
That, hard as was his rule to me at first,  
He now is softly seated in my heart.  
Hence when he robs me of all energy,  
So that the spirits seem forsaking me,  
Then the frail fainting soul such sweetness feels  
That in the face all colour dies away.  
Love then has over me such mastery,  
That he compels my sighs to flow and speak ;  
And they go forth entreating  
My lady to bestow more grace on me.  
This is my state whene'er she looks on me,  
And she so humble is, 'tis not believed.

## CANZONE III.

GLI occhi dolenti per pietà del core  
Hanno di lagrimar sofferta pena  
Sì che per vinti son rimasi omai ;  
Ora s' io voglio sfogar lo dolore  
Che a poco a poco alla morte mi mena,  
Convienemi parlar traendo guai.  
E perchè mi ricorda ch' i' parlai  
Della mia donna, mentre che vivea,  
Donne gentili, volentier con vui,  
Non vuò parlare altrui,  
Se non a cor gentil ch' in donna sia.  
E dicerò di lei piangendo pui  
Che se n' è gita in ciel subitamente,  
Ed ha lasciato Amor meco dolente.  
Ita se n' è Beatrice in l'alto cielo,  
Nel reame ove gli angeli hanno pace,  
E sta con loro, e voi, donne, ha lasciate.  
Non la ci tolse qualità di gelo,  
Nè di calore, come l' altre face ;  
Ma solo fu sua gran benignitate.



## CANZONE III.

THE eyes which mourn in pity for the heart,  
Such suffering have endured from many tears,  
That they at length are perfectly subdued ;  
And now if I would give my woe relief,  
Which step by step is leading me to death,  
I needs must tell my sorrow in my moans ;  
And as I well remember that I spoke  
Concerning my blest lady while she lived,  
Ye gentle ladies, willingly with you,  
Now will I speak to none  
Save to the gentle heart in lady's breast.  
And weeping, then, my song shall be of her  
Who is to heaven departed suddenly,  
And has left Love companion of my grief.  
To highest heaven Beatrice is gone,  
Into the realm where angels dwell in peace,  
And rests with them ; and, ladies, you she hath left.  
No quality of cold, nor yet of heat,  
Robb'd us of her, as it of others does ;  
But her supreme benignity alone.



Chè luce della sua umiltate  
Passò li cieli con tanta virtute  
Che fe' maravigliar l' eterno Sire,  
Sì che dolce desire  
Lo giunse di chiamar tanta salute,  
E fella di quaggiù a se venire ;  
Perchè vedea ch' esta vita noiosa  
Non era degna di sì gentil cosa.  
Partissi della sua bella persona  
Piena di grazia l' anima gentile,  
Ed è sì gloriosa in loco degno.  
Chi non la piange quando ne ragiona  
Core ha di pietra sì malvagio e vile  
Ch' entrar non vi può spirito benegno.  
Non è di cor villan sì alto ingegno  
Che possa imaginar di lei alquanto,  
E però non gli vien di pianger voglia.  
Ma vien tristizia, e doglia  
Di sospirare e di morir di pianto,  
E d' ogni consolar l' anima spoglia  
Chi vide nel pensiero alcuna volta  
Qual' ella fu, e com' ella n' è tolta.  
Dannomi angoscia li sospiri forte  
Quando il pensiero nella mente grave



For the bright beam of her humility  
Pass'd with such virtue the celestial spheres,  
That it raised wonder in the eternal Sire :  
So that his pleasure was  
To call away a soul so full of grace,  
And make it from our earth ascend to him,  
Deeming this life of weariness and care  
Unworthy of a thing so excellent.

Forth from her beauteous frame the soul is fled,  
Replete with perfect gentleness and grace,  
And is made glorious in a worthy place.  
He who can speak of her without a tear,  
Must have a heart of stone, perverse and vile,  
Where kindly spirit can no entrance find.  
The ignoble heart is fraught with sense too low  
To form the faintest image of her worth,  
And hence to such comes no desire to weep.  
But grief and sadness come,  
And sighs and deadly sorrow, and the soul  
Of every consolation is bereft,  
To him who but in thought has once beheld  
How good she was, and how from us is taken.  
Great is the anguish which my sighs inflict,  
When to the burden'd mind remembrance brings

M'arrecà quella che m' ha il cor diviso.  
E spesse fiate pensando alla morte  
Vienemene un deslo tanto soave  
Che mi tramuta lo color nel viso ;  
E quand' il maginar mi tien ben fiso,  
Giungemi tanta pena d' ogni parte,  
Ch' i' mi riscuoto per dolor ch' io sento ;  
E sì fatto divento  
Che da le genti vergogna mi parte.  
Po' i' piangendo sol nel mio lamento  
Chiamo Beatrice, e dico : or se' tu morta !  
E mentre ch' io la chiamo mi conforta.  
Pianger di doglia, e sospirar d' angoscia  
Mi stringe il core ovunque sol mi trovo,  
Sì che ne 'ncrescerebbe a chi m' udisse ;  
E qual è stata la mia vita, poscia  
Che la mia donna andò nel secol novo,  
Lingua non è che dicer lo sapesse.  
E però, donne mie, pur ch' io volesse,  
Non vi saprei dir bene quel ch' io sono,  
Sì mi fa travagliar l' acerba vita,  
La qual è sì invilita  
Ch' ogni uom par che mi dica : io t' abbandono,  
Veggendo la mia labbia tramortita.



The thought of her who has my heart divided.  
And often when I ruminare on death,  
There comes to me so sweet a wish to die,  
That in my face it makes the colour change.  
And when imagination holds me fast,  
Pain so excessive seizes all my frame,  
That I am roused through very agony;  
And such a spectacle  
Become, that shame disparts me from mankind.  
Then lonely, weeping, I lament and call  
On Beatrice, and say, art thou then dead !  
And while I call on her am comforted.  
The sighs of anguish and the tears of grief  
So wring the heart, whene'er I am alone,  
That who should hear me must compassion feel.  
And what my life hath been, e'er since the day  
That to the world unknown my lady went,  
Tongue there is not that hath the power to tell.  
And therefore, ladies, even though I would,  
I could not truly tell you what I am,  
So am I harass'd by my bitter life,  
Which is become so vile,  
That all men seem to say, I own thee not,  
Seeing my countenance show signs of death.

Ma quel ch' io sia la mia donna il si vede,  
Ed io ne spero ancor da lei mercede.  
Pietosa mia Canzone, or va piangendo,  
E ritrova le donne e le donzelle,  
A cui le tue sorelle  
Erano usate di portar letizia ;  
E tu che se' figliuola di tristizia  
Vattene sconsolata a star con elle.



But what I truly am my lady sees,  
 And still from her I hope for my reward.  
 My piteous Song, now weeping go thy way,  
 And for the ladies and the damsels seek,  
 To whom thy sisters blithe  
 Were wont to bear the happy notes of joy ;  
 And thou, who art the daughter of my sorrow,  
 Depart disconsolate to dwell with them.

## SONETTO XVI.

VENITE a intender li sospiri miei,  
O cor gentili, che pietà il disla,  
Li quali sconsolati vanno via,  
E se non fosser, di dolor morrei ;  
Perocchè gli occhi mi sarebber rei  
Molte fiate più ch' io non vorrìa,  
Lasso di pianger sì la donna mia,  
Che sfogherei lo cor piangendo lei.  
Voi udirete lo chiamar sovente  
La mia donna gentil che sen è gita  
Al secol degno della sua virtute ;  
E dispregiar talora questa vita  
In persona dell' anima dolente  
Abbandonata da la sua salute.



## SONNET XVI.

O COME, ye gentle hearts, for pity calls,  
And listen with compassion to my sighs,  
Which go their way from me disconsolate,  
And but for them I should of grief expire.  
For many a time the eyes would rebels be,  
Much more alas than I could wish, nor give  
Their aid in weeping for my lady's loss,  
So that by tears my heart might be relieved.  
Oft will you hear them call upon the name  
Of her, my gentle lady, who is gone  
Unto a world deserving of her worth ;  
And sometimes hear this life despised by them,  
In person of the deep-afflicted soul  
Abandon'd by the fountain of her health.



## BALLATA IV.

QUANTUNQUE volte, lasso ! mi rimembra  
Ch' io non debbo giammai  
Veder la donna ond' io vò sì dolente,  
Tanto dolore intorno al cor m'assembra  
La dolorosa mente  
Ch' io dico : anima mia, chè non ten vai ?  
Chè li tormenti che tu porterai  
Nel secol che t'è già tanto nojoso  
Mi fan pensoso di paura forte ;  
Ond'io chiamo la morte  
Come soave e dolce mio riposo ;  
E dico : vieni a me, con tanto amore,  
Ch' io sono astioso di chiunque muore.  
E' si raccoglie ne li miei sospiri  
Un suono di pietade  
Che va chiamando morte tuttavia.  
A lei si volser tutti i miei desiri,  
Quando la donna mia  
Fu giunta da la sua crudelitade ;  
Perchè 'l piacere de la sua beltade



## BALLATA IV.

ALAS ! whenever memory recalls  
That I may never more  
Behold the lady whom I so lament,  
The afflicted mind collects around my heart  
Such overwhelming grief,  
That I exclaim, my soul, why longer stay ?  
For all the torments which thou shalt endure  
In this sad world, to thee so painful grown,  
Fill me with thought and fear of ills to come.  
Wherefore I call for death,  
As for a sweet and tranquil state of rest,  
And say, O come to me ! with love so true,  
That I am envious of whoever dies.  
Confused amid the tumult of my sighs  
A piteous sound is heard,  
Which supplicates for death unceasingly ;  
To him were all my ardent wishes turn'd,  
That instant when my lady  
Was overtaken by his cruelty.  
For when the beauty of her pleasing form,

Partendo sè da la nostra veduta  
Divenne spirital bellezza e grande,  
Che per lo cielo spande  
Luce d'amor che gli angeli saluta,  
E lo'ntelletto lor alto e sottile  
Face maravigliar, sì vien gentile.



Withdrawing from our view, was lost to us,  
It changed to beauty, spiritual and great,  
Which through the heaven spreads  
A light of love, that greets the angelic choir,  
And in their deep and subtle intellect  
Causes astonishment, it is so fair.

## SONETTO XVII.

**ERA** venuta ne la mente mia  
La gentil donna, che per suo valore  
Fu posta dall'altissimo Signore  
Nel ciel de l'umiltà dov'è Maria.

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**ERA** venuta ne la mente mia  
Quella donna gentil cui piange Amore,  
Entro quel punto che lo suo valore  
Vi trasse a riguardar quel ch'io faccia.  
**Amor** che ne la mente la sentia  
S'era svegliato nel distrutto core,  
E diceva a'sospiri: andate fuore;  
Per che ciascun dolente sen partia.  
**Piangendo** uscivan fuor de lo mio petto  
Con una voce che sovente mena  
Le lagrime dogliose agli occhi tristi.  
**Ma** que' che n'uscian fuor con maggior pena  
Venien dicendo: O nobile intelletto,  
Oggi fa l'anno che nel ciel salisti.



## SONNET XVII.

REMEMBRANCE had brought back into my mind  
The gentle lady, who for worthiness  
Was raised to glory by the Lord most high,  
Where in the heaven of meekness Mary dwells.

---

REMEMBRANCE had brought back into my mind  
That gentle lady for whom Love doth weep,  
At the same instant that his influence  
Drew your regard to what engaged me.  
Love, who perceived her presence in the mind,  
Had waked from slumber in my wretched heart,  
And calling to the sighs, exclaim'd, go forth!  
They heard, and each departed mournfully.  
Weeping they issued from my breast, with voice  
Of grief, which often brings to the sad eyes  
The bitter tears of my unhappiness.  
But those which issued forth with greater pain  
Went saying, Noble intellect, this day  
Completes the year since thy ascent to heaven.

## SONETTO XVIII.

VIDERO gli occhi miei quanta pietate  
Era venuta in la vostra figura,  
Quando guardaste gli atti e la statura  
Ch'io faccia per dolor molte fiate.  
Allor m'accorsi che voi pensavate  
La qualità della mia vita oscura,  
Sicchè mi giunse nel core paura  
Di dimostrar con gli occhi mia viltate.  
E tolsimi dinanzi a voi, sentendo  
Che si movean le lagrime dal core  
Ch'era sommosso dalla vostra vista.  
Io dicea poscia nell'anima trista :  
Ben è con quella donna quell'amore  
Lo qual mi face andar così piangendo.



## SONNET XVIII.

THESE eyes have seen how great the pity was  
That overspread your features, when you mark'd  
The actions and condition which through grief  
My wretched person many times display'd.  
I then perceived that you were pondering  
Upon the nature of my gloomy life,  
So that a fear within my heart arose  
Of showing with the eyes my abjectness ;  
And from your presence I withdrew, for tears,  
I felt, were set in motion at the heart,  
Which by your look was painfully disturb'd.  
I afterward, within the mournful soul,  
Said, surely with that lady must abide  
The love which makes me go thus sorrowing.



## SONETTO XIX.

Color d'amore e di pietà sembianti  
Non preser mai così mirabilmente  
Viso di donna per veder sovente  
Occhi gentili, e dolorosi pianti,  
Come lo vostro, qualora davanti  
Vedetevi la mia labbia dolente,  
Sì che per voi mi vien cosa alla mente,  
Ch'io temo forte, non lo cor si schianti.  
Io non posso tener gli occhi distrutti  
Che non riguardin voi molte fiate,  
Per desiderio di pianger ch'elli hanno :  
E voi cresceste sì lor volontate  
Che della voglia si consumar tutti,  
Ma lagrimar dinanzi a voi non sanno.



## SONNET XIX.

NEVER did pity's semblance and love's hue  
Take such admired possession of the face  
Of lady, from her having oft observed  
The gentle eyes and tears that told her grief,  
As it doth take of yours, when you regard  
My mournful aspect which before you stands :  
So that through you my mind recalls a thing,  
Which makes me greatly fear the heart will break.  
I struggle to prevent the wasted eyes  
From gazing on you often, but in vain ;  
So strong is the desire they have to weep :  
And you have so increased their wilfulness,  
That by their wishing they are quite consumed,  
But cannot in your presence shed a tear.

## SONETTO XX.

L' AMARO lagrimar che voi faceste,  
Occhi miei, così lunga stagione,  
Faceva lagrimar l'altre persone  
De la pietade, come voi vedeste.  
Ora mi par che voi l'obbliereste,  
S'io fossi dal mio lato sì fellone  
Ch' io non ven disturbassi ogni cagione,  
Membrandovi colei cui voi piangeste.  
La vostra vanità mi fa pensare,  
E spaventami sì ch'io temo forte  
Del viso d'una donna che vi mira.  
Voi non dovrete mai, se non per morte,  
La vostra donna ch'è morta obbliare.  
Così dice il mio core, e poi sospira.



## SONNET XX.

THE many bitter tears that you have shed,  
Mine eyes, during long seasons past, drew down  
Tears of commiseration from the eyes  
Of other persons, as you did observe.  
Now it appears you would forget the past,  
If I on my part were so criminal  
That I disturb'd you not continually,  
Reminding you of her for whom you wept.  
Your vanity disquieteth my thoughts,  
And so alarms me, that I greatly fear  
A lady's countenance who looks on you.  
You never more, unless through death, should be  
Forgetful of your lady who is dead.  
So says my anxious heart, and then it sighs.

## SONETTO XXI.

GENTIL pensiero che parla di vui  
Sen vien a dimorar meco sovente,  
E ragiona d' Amor sì dolcemente  
Che face consentir lo core in lui.  
L' anima dice al cor : chi è costui  
Che viene a consolar la nostra mente,  
Ed è la sua virtù tanto possente  
Ch' altro pensier non lascia star con nui ?  
Ei le risponde : O anima pensosa,  
Quest' è uno spiritel novo d' Amore  
Che reca innanzi me li suoi desiri ;  
E la sua vita, e tutto il suo valore  
Mosse dagli occhi di quella pietosa  
Che si turbava de' nostri martiri.




## SONNET XXI.

LADY, the gentle thought which speaks of you  
Comes frequently to bear me company,  
And then so sweetly reasons upon Love,  
It makes the heart consent to all it says.  
The soul says to the heart, O who is this  
That comes with consolation to our mind,  
And is so strong in virtue he permits  
No other thought beside with us to stay ?  
The heart replies to her, O thoughtful soul,  
This is a new and gentle spirit of Love,  
Who brings and lays before me his desires ;  
And all his power, and his very life,  
Hath sprung from pity in that lady's eyes  
Who was distress'd to see our sufferings.

## SONETTO XXII.

LASSO ! per forza di molti sospiri  
Che nascon di pensier che son nel core  
Gli occhi son vinti, e non hanno valore  
Di riguardar persona che li miri.  
E fatti son che pajon due desiri  
Di lagrimare e di mostrar dolore ;  
E spesse volte piangon sì che Amore  
Gli cerchia di corona di martiri.  
Questi pensieri e li sospir ch'io gitto  
Diventano nel core sì angosciosi,  
Che Amor vi tramortisce, sì sen dole :  
Perocch'egli hanno in lor li dolorosi  
Quel dolce nome di Madonna scritto,  
E della morte sua molte parole.



## SONNET XXII.

ALAS ! through violence of many sighs,  
Which spring from thoughts that lie within the heart,  
The eyes are conquer'd, and have not the power  
To look again on her who looks on them.  
And such they are, they seem but two desires,  
Of shedding tears and manifesting grief;  
And many times they weep so bitterly  
That Love surrounds them with the martyr's crown.  
These thoughts, and the tumultuous sighs I heave,  
Become such cruel torments in the heart,  
That Love through pain of them almost expires.  
For they, the widow'd mourners, bear inscribed  
That sweet name of Madonna, and record  
Her death in many melancholy words.



## SONETTO XXIII.

DEH peregrini, che pensosi andate  
Forse di cosa che non vi è presente,  
Venite voi di sì lontana gente,  
Come alla vista voi ne dimostrate,  
Che non piangete quando voi passate  
Per il suo mezzo la città dolente,  
Come quelle persone che niente  
Par che 'ntendesser la sua gravitate?  
Se voi restate per volere udire,  
Certo lo cuore de' sospir mi dice  
Che lagrimando n'uscirete pui.  
Ella ha perduta la sua Beatrice;  
E le parole ch' uom di lei può dire  
Hanno virtù di far piangere altrui.

## SONNET XXIII.

SAY, pilgrims, ye who go thus pensively,  
Musing perchance on things that distant are,  
Come ye from land and men so far away,  
As by your outward mien ye show to us,  
That ye weep not when passing through the midst  
Of the dejected city, in her woe,  
Seeming as persons who have never heard  
Of the calamity oppressing her?  
If ye remain and have the will to hear,  
This heart of sighs assures me ye will then  
Share in our grief and weep when ye depart.  
The desolate city mourns her Beatrice,  
And in the tale that may be told of her  
Is virtue to force every one to weep.

## SONETTO XXIV.

OLTRE la spera che più larga gira  
Passa 'l sospiro ch'esce del mio cuore ;  
Intelligenza nova, che l' Amore  
Piangendo mette in lui, pur su lo tira :  
Quand' egli è giunto là dov' el disira,  
Vede una donna che riceve onore,  
E luce sì, che per lo suo splendore  
Lo peregrino spirito la mira.  
Vedela tal che quando il mi ridice  
Io non l'intendo, sì parla sottile  
Al cor dolente che lo fa parlare.  
So io ch' el parla di quella gentile,  
Però che spesso ricorda Beatrice ;  
Sì ch' io l'intendo ben, donne mie care.

## SONNET XXIV.

Beyond the circling sphere of widest range  
Passes the sigh which issues from my heart ;  
Thither updrawn by intellectual power  
Unknown before, which weeping Love inspires.  
When it hath reach'd the bourn of its desire,  
A lady it beholds receiving honour,  
And shining so, that through her splendid light  
The pilgrim spirit gazes and admires.  
It sees her such, that when 'tis told to me  
I understand it not, so subtle are  
The answers to the heart that makes it speak.  
I know it speaketh of that gentle one,  
For Beatrice it often brings to mind ;  
So far, dear ladies, well I understand.


[REDACTED]

1. 1972 10/10/72

**CANZONI**  
**OF**  
**THE CONVITO.**

## CANZONE I.

Voi che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete,  
Udite il ragionar ch'è nel mio core,  
Ch'io nol so dire altrui, sì mi par novo :  
Il ciel che segue lo vostro valore,  
Gentili creature che voi sete,  
Mi tragge nello stato ov'io mi trovo ;  
Onde'l parlar della vita, ch'io provo,  
Par che si drizzi degnamente a vui :  
Però vi priego che lo m'intendiate.  
Io vi dirò del cor la novitate,  
Come l'anima trista piange in lui ;  
E come un spirto contra lei favella,  
Che vien pe'raggi della vostra stella.  
Suolea esser vita dello cor dolente  
Un soave pensier, che se ne gia  
Molte fiâte a'piè del vostro Sire ;  
Ove una donna gloriar vedia,  
Di cui parlava a me sì dolcemente,  
Che l'anima diceva : i' men vo'gire.  
Or apparisce chi lo fa fuggire ;



## CANZONE I.

YE who by intellect the third heaven move,  
Give ear unto the reasoning in my heart,  
Which none but you may hear, so strange it seems :  
The heaven that obeys your influence,  
Creatures who are all gentleness and love,  
Hath drawn me to the state in which I am ;  
Hence the discourse upon the life I prove,  
It seems, should meetly be address'd to you ;  
Therefore I pray you to attend to me.  
I will unfold to you the heart's new cares,  
How the dejected soul within it weeps ;  
And how a spirit against her reasoneth,  
Which on the beams of your fair star descends.  
The joyless heart was wont to be sustain'd  
In life by a sweet thought, which often bent  
Its flight unto the footstool of your Sire ;  
Where it beheld a lady glorified,  
Of whom so sweetly it discoursed to me,  
That the soul said, would I could follow her !  
Now appears one which drives the thought away,



E signoreggia me di tal vertute,  
Che'l cor ne trema sì che fuori appare.  
Questi mi face una donna guardare,  
E dice : chi veder vuol la salute,  
Faccia che gli occhi d'esta donna miri,  
S'egli non teme angoscia di sospiri.

Trova contrario tal che lo distrugge  
L'umil pensiero, che parlar mi suole  
D'un'angiola che 'n cielo è coronata.  
L'anima piange sì ancor len duole,  
E dice : oh lassa me, come si fugge  
Questo pietoso che m'ha consolata !  
Degli occhi miei dice questa affannata :  
Qual ora fu che tal donna gli vide ?  
E perchè non credeano a me di lei ?  
Io dicea : ben negli occhi di costei  
De'star colui che li miei pari uccide ;  
E non mi valse ch'io ne fossi accorta  
Che non mirasser tal, ch'io ne son morta.

Tu non se'morta, ma se'ismarrita,  
Anima nostra, che sì ti lamenti,  
Dice uno spiritel d'amor gentile ;  
Chè questa bella donna, che tu senti,  
Ha trasformata in tanto la tua vita,

And rules me with such power, that it makes  
The heart to tremble so as to be seen.  
A lady this one makes me to regard,  
And says, he who would see the bliss of heaven,  
Let him intently view this lady's eyes,  
Unless the painfulness of sighs he dread.  
This rival spirit opposes and destroys  
The humble thought, accustom'd to discourse  
Of a bright angel who in heaven is crown'd.  
The soul so mourns her loss that still she weeps,  
And says, ah woe is me ! how flees away  
The pitying thought that was my comforter !  
Again, the troubled soul says of mine eyes,  
What was the hour this lady look'd on them ?  
And why believed they not my words of her ?  
I said, full surely in that lady's eyes  
Must dwell the power that such as me destroys ;  
And it avail'd me not that I foresaw  
They should not gaze on her, whence I am dead.  
Thou art not dead, but in delusion strayest,  
Poor soul, who so lamentest thy estate,  
Exclaims a little gentle spirit of love ;  
For this fair lady, who disquiets thee,  
Has so transform'd thy life, that thou hast fear

Che n'hai paura, sì se' fatta vile.  
Mira quanto ella è pietosa ed umile,  
Saggia e cortese nella sua grandezza ;  
E pensa di chiamarla donna omai :  
Chè, se tu non t'inganni, tu vedrai  
Di sì alti miracoli adornezza,  
Che tu dirai : Amor, signor verace,  
Ecco l' ancella tua ; fa che ti piace.  
Canzone, io credo che saranno radi  
Color che tua ragione intendan bene,  
Tanto lor parli faticosa e forte :  
Onde se per ventura egli addiviene  
Che tu dinanzi da persone vadi,  
Che non ti pajan d' essa bene accorte ;  
Allor ti priego che ti riconforte,  
Dicendo lor, diletta mia novella :  
Ponete mente almen com' io son bella.



Of her, so spiritless thou art become.  
Behold how piteous and how meek she is,  
How courteous in her greatness and how sage ;  
And think to call her mistress evermore :  
For thou shalt see, if not by self deceived,  
The beauty of such lofty miracles,  
That thou wilt say, O Love, my sovereign true,  
Behold thy handmaid ; do as pleaseth thee.

My Song, I do believe that there are few  
Who will thy reasoning rightly understand,  
To them so hard and dark is thy discourse.  
Hence peradventure, if it come to pass  
That thou shouldst find thyself with persons who  
Appear unskill'd to comprehend thee well,  
I pray thee then, my young and well-beloved,  
Be not discomforted, but say to them,  
Take note at least how beautiful I am.

## CANZONE II.

AMOR, che nella mente mi ragiona  
Della mia donna disiosamente,  
Move cose di lei meco sovente,  
Che lo 'ntelletto sovr' esse disvia.  
Lo suo parlar sì dolcemente sona,  
Che l' anima, ch' ascolta e che lo sente,  
Dice : oh me lassa, ch' io non son possente  
Di dir quel ch' odo della donna mia !  
E certo e' mi convien lasciar in pria,  
S' io vo' trattar di quel ch' odo di lei,  
Ciò che lo mio intelletto non comprende,  
E di quel che s' intende  
Gran parte, perchè dirlo non saprei.  
Però se le mie rime avran difetto,  
Ch' entreran nella loda di costei,  
Di ciò si biasmi il debole intelletto,  
E' l parlar nostro, che non ha valore  
Di ritrar tutto ciò che dice Amore.  
Non vede il sol, che tutto 'l mondo gira,  
Cosa tanto gentil, quanto in quell' ora,

## CANZONE II.


Love, who discourses to me in my mind  
With never-ceasing pleasure of my lady,  
Often says things to me concerning her  
On which the intellect reflects till lost.  
The music of his words so sweetly sounds,  
That the attentive soul, which hears and feels,  
Exclaims, alas, why have I not the power  
To tell what of my lady I do hear?  
'Tis sure, that in the first place I must leave,  
If I would treat of what I hear of her,  
That which my reason cannot comprehend,  
And of that understood  
Great part, from inability of speech.  
Hence if my verses shall defective prove,  
Which fondly enter on this lady's praise,  
The feeble understanding must be blamed,  
And our deficient language, wanting power  
To paint completely that which Love describes.  
The sun, that all this world revolves around,  
Sees not a thing so fair and excellent,

Che luce nella parte ove dimora  
La donna, di cui dire Amor mi face.  
Ogni 'ntelletto di lassù la mira ;  
E quella gente che qui s'innamora  
Ne' lor pensieri la trovano ancora,  
Quando Amor fa sentir della sua pace.  
Suo esser tanto a Quei, che gliel dà, piace,  
Che 'nfonde sempre in lei la sua vertute,  
Oltre il dimando di nostra natura.  
La sua anima pura,  
Che riceve da lui questa salute,  
Lo manifesta in quel, ch'ella conduce ;  
Chè in sue bellezze son cose vedute,  
Che gli occhi di color, dov' ella luce,  
Ne mandan messi al cor pien di disiri,  
Che prendon aere e diventan sospiri.  
In lei discende la virtù divina,  
Siccome face in angelo che 'l vede :  
E qual donna gentil questo non crede,  
Vada con lei, e miri gli atti sui.  
Quivi, dov'ella parla, si dichina,  
Un angelo dal ciel, che reca fede  
Come l'alto valor, ch'ella possiede,  
E' oltre a quel che si conviene a nui.

As when he shines upon the part where dwells  
The lady for whom Love commands my song.  
On her all heaven's intelligences gaze ;  
And they whom she enamours here below  
Still find her image present to their thoughts,  
When Love calms all emotions into peace.  
With such complacency her Maker views  
His work, that he still showers his gifts on her,  
Beyond our nature's uttermost demand.  
Her pure and spotless soul,  
Which from his hand receives this heavenly grace,  
Declares his power in her material frame ;  
For in her beauty things are seen so rare,  
That from the eyes of those she shines upon,  
Fly heralds to the heart, with wishes fill'd,  
Which mount into the air and sighs become.  
On her the virtue of the Deity  
Descends, as on the angel that beholds him :  
And this if gentle lady disbelieve,  
Let her accompany her, and mark her ways.  
Here, when she speaks, an angel boweth down  
From heaven, who joyful testimony bears  
How the high worth of which she is possess'd  
Exceeds the endowments that to us belong.



Gli atti soavi, ch'ella mostra altrui,  
Vanno chiamando Amor, ciascuno a prova,  
In quella voce che lo fa sentire.  
Di costei si può dire :  
Gentil è in donna ciò che in lei si trova ;  
E bello è tanto, quanto lei simiglia.  
E puossi dir che il suo aspetto giova  
A consentir ciò che par maraviglia :  
Onde la fede nostra è ajutata ;  
Però fu tal da eterno creata.  
Cose appariscon nello suo aspetto,  
Che mostran de' piacer del Paradiso ;  
Dico negli occhi, e nel suo dolce riso,  
Che le vi reca Amor com' a suo loco.  
Elle soverchian lo nostro intelletto,  
Come raggio di sole un fragil viso :  
E perch'io non le posso mirar fiso,  
Mi convien contentar di dirne poco.  
Sua beltà piove fiammelle di fuoco,  
Animate d'un spirito gentile,  
Ch'è creatore d'ogni pensier buono ;  
E rompon come tuono  
Gl'innati vizj, che fanno altrui vile.  
Però qual donna sente sua beltate




The courteous acts which she bestows on all,  
Rival each other in invoking Love,  
With that persuasive voice which makes him hear.  
Of her it may be said,  
Fair is in lady what is found in her,  
And most is fair what most resembles her.  
And truly we may say, her aspect aids  
Belief in what appears a miracle,  
Hence is our faith confirm'd, and she for this  
Hath been created from eternity.

Things in her countenance appear which show  
The ineffable delights of Paradise ;  
In her sweet smile I say, and in her eyes,  
Whither Love brings them as their proper home.  
Our intellect they dazzle and subdue,  
As the sun's rays o'erpower the feeble sight :  
And since I may not view them stedfastly,  
To say but little I must be content.  
Her beauty showers little flames of fire,  
With a benignant spirit animate,  
Which is creator of all virtuous thought ;  
And they like thunder crush  
The innate vices which make others vile.  
The lady then who hears her beauty blamed,

Biasmar, per non parer queta ed umile,  
Miri costei, ch'è esemplo d'umiltate.  
Quest'è colei, ch'umilia ogni perverso :  
Costei pensò chi mosse l'universo.  
Canzone, e' par che tu parli contraro  
Al dir d'una sorella che tu hai ;  
Chè questa donna, che tant' umil fai,  
Ella la chiama fera e disdegnosa.  
Tu sai che 'l ciel sempr'è lucente e chiaro,  
E, quanto in sè, non si turba giammai ;  
Ma li nostr' occhi per cagioni assai  
Chiaman la stella talor tenebrosa ;  
Così quand' ella la chiama orgogliosa,  
Non considera lei secondo 'l vero,  
Ma pur secondo quel che a lei pareva :  
Chè l'anima temea,  
E teme ancora sì, che mi par fero  
Quantunque io veggio dov' ella mi senta.  
Così ti scusa, se ti fa mestiero ;  
E quando puoi a lei ti rappresenta,  
E di' : Madonna, s'ello v'è a grato,  
Io parlerò di voi in ciascun lato.



For wanting a deportment calm and meek,  
Should view this pattern of humility ;  
'Tis she that humbles every froward heart,  
She, whom the mover of the world conceived.  
My Song, thy words may seem to contradict  
The language of a sister that thou hast ;  
For she declares this lady, whom thou makest  
So humble, to be scornful and severe :  
Thou know'st that heaven is ever clear and bright,  
And ever, as regards itself, serene ;  
But yet our eyes, from causes manifold,  
Do sometimes call the sun itself obscure ;  
So when thy sister calls this lady proud,  
She views her not according to the truth,  
But forms her judgement on appearances :  
For fearful was the soul,  
And still has fear, so that she seems unkind  
Whene'er I see that she observeth me.  
Excuse thee thus, my Song, if there be need ;  
And when thou canst, present thyself to her,  
And say, Madonna, if it pleaseth you,  
Your praise I will rehearse throughout the world.



## CANZONE III.

Le dolci rime d'Amor, ch'io solia  
Cercar ne' miei pensieri,  
Convien ch'io lasci ; non perch'io non spero  
Ad esse ritornare,  
Ma perchè gli atti disdegnosi e feri,  
Che nella donna mia  
Sono appariti, m'han chiuso la via  
Dell'usato parlare :  
E poichè tempo mi par d'aspettare,  
Diporrò giù lo mio soave stile,  
Ch'io ho tenuto nel trattar d'Amore,  
E dirò del valore  
Per lo qual veramente uomo è gentile ;  
Con rima aspra e sottile  
Riprovando il giudizio falso e vile  
Di que' che voglion che di gentilezza  
Sia principio ricchezza.  
E cominciando, chiamo quel signore  
Ch'alla mia donna negli occhi dimora,  
Per ch'ella di sè stessa s'innamora.



## CANZONE III.

THE pleasant rhymes of Love, that I was wont  
To seek for in my thoughts,  
I must forsake ; not that I have not hope  
Of a return to them,  
But because signs of cruelty and scorn,  
Which in my lady's looks  
Are evident, have closed the way against  
My customary strain.  
And since it seems to me fit time to wait,  
I will lay down my soft and tender style,  
That I have held in treating upon Love,  
And of the worth will speak  
Which truly gives nobility to man ;  
With verse severe and keen  
Reproving the opinion false and base  
Of those who hold that of nobility  
The principle is wealth.  
And to begin, I here invoke that lord  
Whose dwelling-place is in my lady's eyes,  
Through whom she is enamour'd of herself.

Tale imperò che gentilezza volse,  
Secondo 'l suo parere,  
Che fosse antica possession d' avere  
Con reggimenti belli :  
E altri fu di più lieve sapere,  
Che tal detto rivolse,  
E l' ultima particola ne tolse,  
Chè non l' avea fors' elli.  
Di dietro da costui van tutti quelli  
Che fan gentili per ischiatta altrui,  
Che lungamente in gran ricchezza è stata.  
Ed è tanto durata  
La così falsa opinion tra nui,  
Che l' uom chiama colui  
Uomo gentil, che può dicere i' fui  
Nipote o figlio di cotal valente,  
Benchè sia da niente :  
Ma vilissimo sembra, a chi 'l ver guata,  
Cui è scorto il cammino e poscia l' erra,  
E tocca tal ch' è morto, e va per terra.  
Chi definisce : uomo è legno animato ;  
Prima dice non vero,  
E dopo 'l falso parla non intero ;  
Ma più forse non vede.



A certain emperor held nobility,  
As it appear'd to him,  
To be possession of ancestral wealth  
With generous manners join'd :  
And there was one of lighter judgement, who  
The saying overthrew ;  
And took the latter clause away, perchance  
Because he had it not.  
Of him the crowd are followers, who affirm  
Those noble who from families are sprung  
That long have flourish'd in great opulence.  
And such the lasting hold  
That this so false opinion among us  
Has taken, that men call  
Him noble who can say I am the son  
Or nephew of some certain man of worth,  
Though worthless of himself :  
But he who looks at truth deems him most vile,  
To whom the way is shown, and erreth still,  
And walks the earth, and yet is as the dead.  
Who defines man an animated tree,  
Says first what is not true,  
Then adds what is defective to the false,  
Happy not seeming more.



Similmente fu chi tenne impero  
In difinire errato,  
Chè prima pose 'l falso, e d' altro lato  
Con difetto procede ;  
Chè le divizie, siccome si crede,  
Non posson gentilezza dar, nè torre,  
Perocchè vili son da lor natura :  
Poi chi pinga figura,  
Se non può esser lei, non la può porre :  
Nè la diritta torre  
Fa piegar rivo che da lunge corre.  
Che sieno vili appare ed imperfette,  
Chè, quantunque collette,  
Non posson quietar, ma dan più cura ;  
Onde l' animo, ch'è dritto e verace,  
Per lor discorrimento non si sface.  
Nè voglion che vil uom gentil divegna,  
Nè di vil padre scenda  
Nazion che per gentil giammai s' intenda :  
Quest' è da lor confesso.  
Onde la lor ragion par che s' offenda,  
In tanto quanto assegna,  
Che tempo a gentilezza si convegna,  
Difinendo con esso.



He in like manner who was emperor  
Did in defining err ;  
For what is false he first assumed, and then  
Defectively proceeds ;  
For riches cannot give nobility,  
As is supposed, nor can they take away,  
Since in their very nature they are vile.  
So he who paints a form,  
If he cannot be it, can give it not ;  
Nor will the upright tower  
Bend to the flood which rolls its stream from far.  
That they imperfect are, and vile, is clear,  
For great howe'er the store,  
They cannot calm, but bring increase of care ;  
And hence the mind, which upright is and true,  
Stands firm, unshaken by the stream of wealth.  
No man low-born ennobled can become,  
Nor from low sire descend  
A race that noble may be ever deem'd ;  
This is by them affirm'd.  
Hence does their reasoning seem to oppose itself ;  
Since it maintains that time  
Is requisite to give nobility,  
With time defining it.

Ancor segue di ciò che innanzi ho messo,  
Che sien tutti gentili, ovver villani,  
O che non fosse a uom cominciamento.  
Ma ciò io non consento,  
Nè eglino altresì, se non Cristiani ;  
Perchè a intelletti sani  
E' manifesto i lor diri esser vani :  
Ed io così per falsi li riprovo,  
E da lor mi rimuovo ;  
E dicer voglio omai, siccome io sento,  
Che cosa è gentilezza, e da che viene,  
E dirò i segni che gentil uom tiene.  
Dico ch'ogni virtù principalmente  
Vien da una radice ;  
Virtude intendo, che fa l'uom felice  
In sua operazione ;  
Quest'è, secondochè l'Etica dice,  
Un abito eligente,  
Lo qual dimora in mezzo solamente,  
E tai parole pone.  
Dico che nobiltate in sua ragione  
Importa sempre ben del suo soggetto,  
Come viltate importa sempre male :  
E virtute cotale



It follows from such argument as this,  
That all are noble, or that all are base,  
Or no beginning there has been to man.  
But this I cannot grant,  
Nor they moreover, if they Christians be.  
Wherefore to healthful minds  
Their arguments are manifestly vain :  
And thus I reprobate their falsity,  
And turn from them away ;  
And now will tell, as it appears to me,  
What is nobility, and whence it springs,  
And what the signs that mark the noble man.  
I say, each virtue in its origin  
Springs from a single root ;  
Virtue I mean, which happiness bestows  
On man by its good works ;  
This is, as Aristotle's Ethics say,  
A habit of election,  
Choice of the medium between two extremes ;  
And such the words there used.  
I say the nature of nobility  
Ever implies the subject to be good,  
As baseness e'er implies the subject bad.  
And virtue such as this

Dà sempre altrui di sè buono intelletto :  
Perchè in medesimo detto  
Convengono ambedue, ch'en d'un effetto ;  
Onde convien dall'altra venga l'una,  
O da un terzo ciascuna :  
Ma se l'una val ciò che l'altra vale,  
Ed ancor più, da lei verrà piuttosto :  
E ciò ch'io ho detto qui sia per supposto.  
E' gentilezza dovunque virtute,  
Ma non virtute ov' ella ;  
Siccome è 'l cielo dovunque la stella ;  
Ma ciò non e converso.  
E noi in donne, ed in età novella,  
Vedem questa salute,  
In quanto vergognose son tenute ;  
Ch'è da virtù diverso.  
Dunque verrà, come dal nero il perso,  
Ciascheduna virtute da costei,  
Ovvero il gener lor, ch'io misi avanti.  
Però nessun si vanti,  
Dicendo : per ischiata io son con lei ;  
Ch'elli son quasi Dei  
Que' c'han tal grazia fuor di tutti rei ;  
Chè solo Iddio all'anima la dona,

Gives ever of its goodness proofs to all.  
Since in one predicate  
Two things agree, producing one effect,  
The one must from the other be derived,  
Or each one from a third :  
But if the one equals the other's worth,  
And more, from it that other rather springs :  
Let me on this hypothesis proceed.  
Nobility must be where virtue is ;  
But may be, where 'tis not ;  
So heaven is wherever is the sun,  
But not conversely so.  
And we in ladies and in early age  
May see nobility  
Evinced in bashfulness and modesty,  
Which virtue differ from ;  
Hence must proceed, as violet from black,  
Each several virtue from nobility,  
Or from the parent root, before explain'd.  
Therefore let no one boast,  
Saying, nobility is mine by birth ;  
For they are almost gods,  
Who, void of every sin, possess this grace ;  
For God bestows it only on the soul

Che vede in sua persona  
Perfettamente star, sicchè ad alquanti,  
Ch' è seme di felicità, s' accosta,  
Messo da Dio nell' anima ben posta.

L' anima cui adorna esta bontate  
Non la si tiene ascosa ;  
Chè dal principio, ch' al corpo si sposa,  
La mostra infin la morte :  
Ubidente, soave e vergognosa  
E' nella prima etate,  
E sua persona acconcia di beltate,  
Colle sue parti accorte :  
In giovanezza temperata e forte,  
Piena d' amore e di cortese lode,  
E solo in lealtà far si diletta :  
E nella sua senetta,  
Prudente e giusta, e larghezza se n' ode ;  
E in sè medesima gode  
D' udire e ragionar dell' altrui prode :  
Poi nella quarta parte della vita  
A Dio si rimarita,  
Contemplando la fine che l' aspetta ;  
E benedice li tempi passati.  
Vedete omai quanti son gl' ingannati !

Which, in itself, he sees  
From imperfection free ; so that to few  
This seed of happiness is found conjoin'd,  
Planted by God in soul aright disposed.  
The soul that this celestial grace adorns  
In secret hides it not ;  
For from the first, when she the body weds,  
She shows it, until death :  
Gentle, obedient, and alive to shame,  
Is seen in her first age,  
Careful to improve the beauty of her frame  
With all accomplishments :  
In youth is temperate and resolute,  
Replete with love and praise of courtesy,  
Placing in loyalty her sole delight :  
And in declining age  
Is prudent, just, and for her bounty known ;  
And joys within herself  
To listen and discourse for others' good :  
Then in the fourth remaining part of life,  
To God is re-espoused,  
Contemplating the end which is at hand,  
And blesseth all the seasons that are past.  
Reflect now, how the many are deceived !



Contr' agli erranti, mia, tu te n' andrai :

E quando tu sarai

In parte dove sia la donna nostra,

Non le tenere il tuo mestier coverto.

Tu le puoi dir per certo :

Io vo parlando dell' amica vostra.

IL FINE.



Against the erring multitude, my Song,  
Declaiming, go thy way ;  
And where our lady is, when thou shalt be,  
Hide not from her the purport of thy strain ;  
For truly mayst thou say,  
I ever am discoursing of your friend.

THE END.

“La mia piccioletta barca è pervenuta al porto, al quale ella dirizzò la prora, partendosi dallo opposto lito: e comechè il pileggio sia stato picciolo, e il mare, il quale ella ha solcato, basso, e tranquillo; nondimeno di ciò, che senza impedimento è venuta, ne sono da rendere grazie a colui, che felice vento ha prestato alle sue vele. Al quale con quella umiltà, con quella divozione, con quella affezione, che io posso maggiore, non quelle, ne così grandi, come elle si convenieno, ma quelle, che io posso, rendo, benedicendo in eterno il suo nome, e il suo valore.”

Boccaccio, *Vita di Dante*.



## **A P P E N D I X.**

“ Pensò mutar gonnella,  
E da molti altri augei accattò penne.”

DANTE.



## SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY.

. . . . . *Minds of various men*  
*Are variously attemper'd ; in the soul*  
*There is an eye and ear, as in the frame,*  
*Attun'd or not attun'd to harmonies ;*  
*Some more than others catch responding notes*  
*Of sound or language. Some from tongue and pen*  
*Banish all figure, comprehend it not :*  
*Others read wisdom through similitudes,*  
*Through medium of external sign and form,*  
*Their speech by nature rich with images.*  
*And this, if I with reverence so may speak,*  
*Is God's own language : yea, that Eastern tongue*  
*Which He hath chosen to converse with man*  
*Is form'd of symbols. Is not all His world*  
*And all His word one speaking parable,*  
*Speaking to sense of things invisible ?*  
*All things with Him are double, each event*  
*Doth throw its shadow forward : all His word*  
*Is a full store of countless images ;*  
*Who knows them best is most divinely wise.*

To \* \* \* \* \*

LADY, the time-worn knight, who, cheer'd by you,  
Went forth on his adventure, strong in hope,  
Returns inglorious, and compell'd to leave  
The enterprise imperfectly achieved.  
The mystic towers he climb'd and treasure won,  
But foil'd were all his efforts to obtain  
The magic wand, which can with grace transform  
The verse of loftiest bard to humble prose.  
Still deign to accept the offering of his spoil,  
A lyre which faintly echoes Dante's strains  
And sounds your praises in another's name.  
Praises of Beatrice by Dante sung  
In notes of sweetest eloquence, which here  
The lyre repeats, unjust to him and you.

C. L. 1835.



To \* \* \* \* \*

FAIR lady, when I watch those eyes serene,  
And see you smile, and hear your gentle voice,  
I seem in Laura's presence, and the bliss  
Of Petrarch in his happiest hour is mine.  
And when, in sweet discourse on lofty themes,  
I listen to the truths profound which flow .  
So eloquently clear, you then recall  
The Beatrice of Dante's song divine.  
Composed, yet gay, wise, modest, artless, kind,  
All that of love and beauty Plato taught  
Is verified in you : we feel the power  
Of features which awaken instant love :  
Then are enrapt by beauty of the mind,  
And all our thoughts are raised by love to heaven.

C. L. 1835.



## DANTE.

FROM BOCCACCIO.

THOU Dante art my author, bard obscure,  
Sublime, intelligent, whose genius sung  
Mysterious truth, and gave the Tuscan tongue  
Beauty and strength for ever to endure.  
Thy fancy, prompt and daringly secure,  
Roamed thoughtfully the spiritual worlds among  
Of woe and bliss, whence to thy glory sprung  
The Sacred Vision, written to allure  
Mankind to win all joy in earth and heaven.  
Fair Florence was a parent most unjust  
To thee her pious son, to exile driven  
And penury. Ravenna was thy trust,  
And guards thy ashes. May thy soul have flown  
Where justice reigns and envy is unknown !

C. L.



## DANTE.

FROM MICHAEL ANGELO.


HE from the world descended to the abyss,  
And either Hell surveyed ; then, still alive,  
By lofty fancy guided, soared to God,  
And brought to us on earth true light of heaven.  
Star of transcendent worth, his beams disclosed  
The secrets of eternity to man ;  
And the reward he gained most oft bestowed  
By this bad world on those who best deserve.  
Ill were the generous wishes and the deeds  
Of Dante paid by that ungrateful herd  
Who only show no favour to the good.  
Yet to be like him, welcome were his fate !  
His virtue with his banishment to share,  
The happiest state on earth I would exchange.

C. L.

## DANTE.

WORDSWORTH.

UNDER the shadow of a stately pile,  
The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,  
Nor giving heed to aught that passed the while,  
I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,  
The laurelled Dante's favourite seat. A throne,  
In just esteem, it rivals ; though no style  
Be there of decoration to beguile  
The mind, depressed by thought of greatness flown.  
As a true man, who long had served the lyre,  
I gazed with earnestness, and dared no more.  
But in his breast the mighty Poet bore  
A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.  
Bold with the thought, in reverence I sat down,  
And for a moment, filled that empty throne.



REPLY  
TO THE FIRST SONNET OF THE  
VITA NUOVA.

DANTE, thy mystic dream to me appears  
A faithful shadowy picture of the state  
Of youthful poet ardently in love,  
Who hopes and doubts and joys and weeps by turns.  
Love comes full oft in smiles at night's still hour,  
And shows his lady to the mind entranced ;  
He sees an angel form, unveil'd as truth,  
Artless as sleep, in Love's own vesture robed ;  
Then fondly dreams she wakes to Love and him,  
And takes the humble offering of his heart  
With virgin fear, and lives on it alone.  
Blest is he then, nor change nor ill forebodes :  
But Love is wayward as an April morn,  
And clouds and showers succeed brief gleams of joy.

C. L. 1835.

THE SYMBOL OF  
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY. DAUGHTERS OF SION.

THE heavenly Beatrice art thou that led  
Florence's bard through bowers of Paradise,  
Opening, like rosy petals, all the skies :  
E'en thus the tranquil effluence o'er thee shed  
Lighteth me on, the living 'mong the dead,  
The heavenly 'mid the earthly, gives me eyes  
Of glad philosophy, which Heaven descries  
In things below, of thee in all doth read,  
Bearing thine image pictured in the heart,  
In all beholds thine eyes and hears thee speak.  
Thus, though to tell of thee language is weak,  
Yet all things to my spirit find a tongue,  
Events and sights all range and take their part,  
Syllabbling words which unto love belong.



## BEATRICE.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY. DAUGHTERS OF SION.

FAITH, Hope, or Love, whate'er thine earthly name,  
Coming from place of thy transcendent birth  
To fit for heaven the denizens of earth,  
Whatever shape thou wearest, still the same ;—  
The aspiration of one lofty aim,  
Stilling the noise of passion and of mirth,  
Set on her heritage of endless worth,  
And her immortal birthright bent to claim ;—  
Art thou the handmaid, heaven-transforming power,  
Or thou thyself the Bride, so rich thy dower ?  
Thou hauntest me like some night-wandering dream,  
Dreams are more near to heaven than waking theme :  
May I unblamed clothe thee with mortal form,  
All animate with life, with beauty warm ?

## BEATRICE.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY. DAUGHTERS OF SION.

To what shall I compare the varying bloom  
That lights thy face, while my fond thoughts pursue?  
Like the majestic sea which comes to view,  
Closing the valley of my mountain home,  
A living mirror which the heavens illumine,  
For ever beauteous and for ever new,  
And ever changing its ethereal hue,  
While passing gleams light up the purple gloom.  
Thus through the night, in wakeful thought or dream,  
While I behold thy beauteous countenance,  
Expression varies still each speaking glance;  
And when thy smile breaks forth, like some bright gleam,  
I seem to hear thy voice, O music sweet,  
And sit a holy pilgrim at thy feet.



## BEATRICE.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY. DAUGHTERS OF SION.

Bless'd be the day when first on thee I gazed,  
For it hath op'd new worlds of happy thought,  
When upon thee I muse, and musing-fraught  
Tend on thy presence, when thy lustre blaz'd,  
And full on me thy pensive eyes were rais'd !  
For those sweet nets, that have my spirit caught,  
Have purified my soul, and nearer brought  
Him who alone without all blame is prais'd,  
Him who hath made thee, and who keepeth thee,  
And watcheth o'er thee, unto Him I pray ;  
And when aught dark my sinking fancy shrouds,  
'Thou seemest some good angel, from the clouds  
Beck'ning me on to where is no decay,  
But the good bloom with immortality.



## BEATRICE.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY. DAUGHTERS OF SION.

SINCE first mine eyes beheld thy matchless grace,  
And unimagin'd beauty, passing far  
All thy report, and like a lovely star  
Seen through a cloud, through that majestic face,  
And air and speech and action, from its place  
Look'd out a gracious spirit ;—it doth haunt  
My days and nights, till in a dreamy want  
Cold wax my studious tasks, and wane apace  
All the delights of common air and sky,  
Dim grows the eye of heaven ; but I from thence  
Will learn to muse of things beyond our sense,  
More fair than all beheld by mortal eye ;  
Till from the thoughts of thee there shall go forth  
A spirit fairer than the sky and earth.



## DANTE.

FROM THE CATHEDRAL. BUTLER.

I SAW within a glass vast worlds of light,  
Launch'd multitudinous on the shoreless sea,  
While, far outspread, the boundless Deity  
Sat brooding 'mid the peopled Infinite.  
Within her and around her the dark sprite  
Sees—but to know she sees not—the vast zone,  
All bodiless, hung from th' Eternal's throne,  
And hears strange melodies on the ear of night.  
Thus on my heart of hearts still silently  
Lingers the echo of thy solemn strain,  
Thoughtful and mystic Dante ! Then above,  
Dark clouds between, is seen a golden chain,  
And earth and heav'n breathe with Divinity.  
I walk with holy trembling and deep love.

## DANTE.

FROM THE CATHEDRAL. ORIGEN.

INTO God's word, as in a palace fair,  
Thou ledest on and on, while still, beyond  
Each chamber, touch'd by holy Wisdom's wand,  
Another opes, more beautiful and rare ;  
And thou, in each, art kneeling down in prayer,  
From link to link of that mysterious bond,  
Seeking for Christ ; but oh, I fear thy fond  
And beautiful torch, that with so bright a glare  
Lighteth up all things, lest thy heaven-lit brand,  
And thy serene Philosophy divine  
Should take the colourings of earthly thought,  
And I, by their sweet images o'erwrought,  
Led by weak Fancy, should let go Truth's hand,  
And miss the way into the inner shrine.



## THE AGED PILGRIM.

“Thoughtful, upon the silent solemn shore  
Of that vast ocean he must sail so soon.”

YOUNG.

FROM THE BAPTISTERY.

THOU aged man that sittest by the sea,  
Feeding thy thoughts upon the dark-blue ocean,  
And on thy staff with pensive eyes dost lean,  
Say, from that distant land, which none hath seen,  
What visions come to thee,  
From o'er the dark blue caves of ceaseless motion,  
Say, what does thy prophetic soul divine,  
To fill with happy thoughts thy faded eyne?  
Sitting alone upon life's evening shore,  
Thou hear'st th' eternal billows roar,  
Already at the door.  
Lift up thy heart, thou aged man,  
To where thy face is set—that beauteous dome,—  
There thy true birthright scan,  
And contemplate thine own last glorious home.

## THE AGED PILGRIM IN SICKNESS

TO THE MOURNER.

STAY not the tear, nor strive to close the heart  
To gentle grief, when those you love depart  
And leave a happy world, ere yet the mind  
Is weaken'd, and the frame in health declined.  
'Tis just to weep for youth, that in the morn  
Of life's brief day is from the parent torn ;  
To weep for manhood, which the glorious noon  
Of a bright course has nobly reach'd, then soon  
Has fallen. Mourn too for him whose sun descends  
Unclouded, and from children, wife, and friends  
Is sudden snatch'd away :—these claim your tears.  
But weep not for the wreck of seventy years  
Who sinks into the grave, by age oppress'd ;  
His day is spent—'t is night, and time to rest.

C. L.



## SHAKSPEARE.

## SONNET LXXIII.

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,  
As on the ashes of life's day doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

## SONETTO.

TRADUZIONE.

*Stay not the tear, nor strive to close the heart.*

È GIUSTO il lamentar dogliosamente  
Perdita amara, e il condannarlo è stolto :  
Piangiam chi forte ancor di corpo e mente  
Da cruda morte, innanzi tempo, è colto ;  
Chi della vita sul mattin ridente  
De' genitori ai cari amplessi è tolto ;  
Chi manca sul meriggio rifulgente  
A mezza via, dove più lauri ha colto ;  
Chi cade sul tramonto, e pur robusto  
Godea fra sposa e figli ore ben liete :  
Piangete su costor, che il pianto è giusto.  
Ma per colui che gravi membra informa,  
E settant' anni ha scorsi, a che piangete ?  
Compito è il giorno suo, tempo è ch' ei dorma.

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.



## SONETTO.

## IMITAZIONE.

*Fair lady, when I watch those eyes serene.*

DONNA gentil, sotto il tuo dolce impero,  
Fan Bellezza e Virtù cambio felice ;  
Questa del guardo e quella del pensiero,  
Qual Plato immaginò, si fa nutrice.  
Quand' io ti miro, già mi par sincero  
Quel che di Laura sua Petrarca dice ;  
Quand' io ti ascolto, già mi sembra vero  
Quel che Dante ideò della sua Bice.  
Sorge così, quando ti miro e ascolto,  
Dal congiunto poter duplice laccio,  
Pel bello della mente e quel del volto.  
E se, in parlarne, riverente ammuto,  
Appien ti svelerà quel ch' io mi taccio  
*La Lira d' Alighier*, ch' io ti tributo.

GABRIELE ROSSETTI.



*“ Non so frenare il pianto  
Cara, nel dirti addio ;  
Ma questo pianto mio  
Tutto non è dolor :  
È meraviglia, è amore,  
È pentimento, è speme,  
Son mille affetti insieme  
Tutti raccolti al cor.”*

*Metastasio.*

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PRINTED BY RICHARD AND JOHN E. TAYLOR,  
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.



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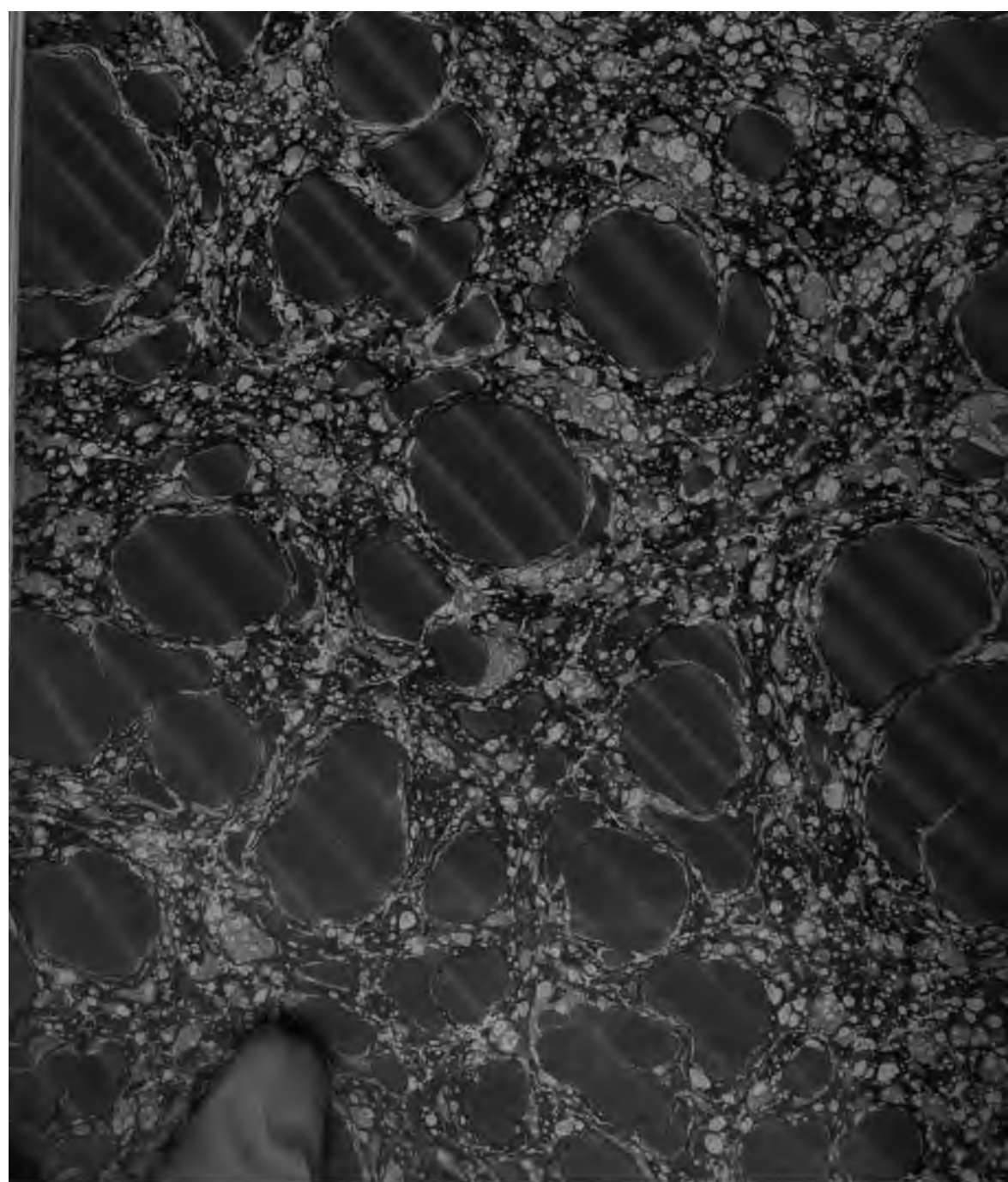
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